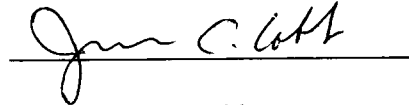


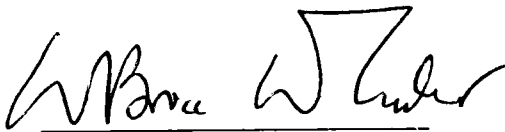
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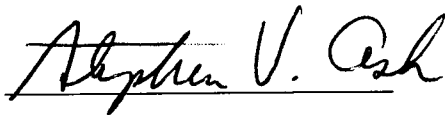


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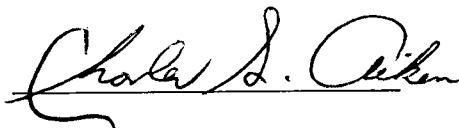
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“SMILE WHEN YOU CALL ME A HILLBILLY”:
THE MODERNIZATION OF COUNTRY MUSIC
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RESPECTABILITY,
1939-1954”

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Jeffrey J. Lange

May 1999

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Teresa, who never stopped believing.

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ABSTRACT

This study parallels changes occurring within country music and southern society in the years between 1939 and 1954. In doing so, it demonstrates how the period witnessed the modernization of country music, its evolution from a regional folk art form aimed at an audience composed primarily of white rural southerners to a nationwide phenomenon seeking to expand its audience and gain respectability on both a regional and national level. This transformation occurred within the context of changes in audience demographics and listeners' preferences initiated by social and cultural developments. An investigation of changing performance styles demonstrates the process of acculturation into the American mainstream undergone by country music and its audience in the 1940s and early 1950s, while an examination of changes in the genre's lyrical subject matter reveals southerners' ambivalent feelings towards nationalization and the modernization of the South. While many embraced the economic benefits of modernization, others begrudged the social and economic consequences. Dividing country music into six sub-genres (Progressive Country, Western Swing, Post-War Traditional, Honky Tonk, Country-Pop and Country-Blues) provides the means for discussing these varying viewpoints as well as explaining country music's expanding appeal.

Analyzing over five thousand sound recordings from the era, this dissertation provides an understanding of the characteristics of the sub-genres and offers insights into reasons for fluctuations in their popularity. Additionally, this study presents the first in-depth examination of changes occurring within country music in the 1940s and

early 1950s and explains why the modernization of the genre took place in the decade after World War II.

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INTRODUCTION

The urban presses and most of the American populace called it "hillbilly music," but the people who enjoyed listening to it cared much less about what others thought than they did about the music itself. To thousands of white working-class southerners, the musical genre now known as "country" was simply the music they grew up with, the music they heard in church, around the house, in the fields where they worked, or during social gatherings. Country music legend Hank Thompson recalls: "I don't remember any other kind of music (except country). To me, that's the only music that anybody listened to." In some cases, it provided release from everyday concerns, in others it furnished words to pent-up feelings and emotions. More than anything else, though, country music in the 1940s and early 1950s gave a collective voice to a group of people marginalized from American society by their economic and social status.¹

Today, country music enjoys a national audience that transcends economic and social boundaries; sixty years ago, however, hillbilly music attracted an audience composed primarily of white, rural southerners. The music they listened to provided a means for defining themselves in a period when their lives remained in an almost constant state of flux. In the 1940s and early 1950s, southern society experienced a tumultuous upheaval initiated by the advent of World War II. The war brought sweeping changes to the southern economy that led to increased urbanization and a

¹ Hank Thompson quoted in Rich Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 1946-1964 (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 6.

veritable revolution in lower- and middle-class employment opportunities. Such a striking alteration in the lifestyles of country music's most ardent listeners naturally affected the genre. Exhibiting remarkable flexibility in a period of dynamic change, country music managed to retain the loyalty of its initial listeners while broadening its appeal to an expanding audience of non-southerners. From humble beginnings, country music emerged in the early 1950s as a highly profitable art form with an audience that was neither as rural nor as unsophisticated as the one in the late 1930s.

With the expansion of the country music audience came recognition among scholars of the genre's historical importance. Before World War II, the music of rural white southerners seldom attracted any attention beyond Dixie's borders. Most Americans viewed southern music in pejorative terms until the mid-twentieth century, although a fascination with southern minstrels, cowboy singers, and mountain balladeers existed as early as the late 1800s. The publication of Howard Thorp and John A. Lomax's anthologies of cowboy songs (1908-1910) and Cecil Sharp's collection of Appalachian folksongs (1918) signaled the beginning of scholarly interest in white southern music. Robert W. Gordon (founder of the Library of Congress Archive of American Folksong) along with two prominent folklorists (Lomax and Herbert Halpert) wrote about early commercially recorded southern music in the late 1930s and 1940s. Biographies of early hillbilly performers also began to appear during this period, as well as the first country music journal (The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder). Other early country music journalists include Johnny Sippel and Nat Green of The Billboard. The first academic thesis on

country music appeared in 1948, written by D. K. Wilgus at Ohio State University. In 1951, the appearance of Disc Collector introduced a group of scholars who furnished biographical and discographical data on country music performers. The first article on country music in a scholarly journal (John Greenway's "Jimmie Rodgers—A Folksong Catalyst") appeared in the Journal of American Folklore (1957). Country music historiography entered a new era with the 1965 "Hillbilly Issue" of the Journal of American Folklore, the first compilation of essays devoted to treating the genre as a subject worthy of scholarly inquiry. A similar issue of Western Folklore appeared in 1971, as well as two individual works (Archie Green, Only a Miner and Norm Cohen, Long Steel Rail) that examined the historical importance of country music songs. Bill C. Malone's Country Music U.S.A. (1968) provided the framework for the modern study of the genre, using a contextual approach in an effort to place the music's development within the parameters of social phenomena. Recently, several sub-regional studies have appeared that examine the development of country music in specific areas of the South; several other works have brought the issue of authenticity to the forefront of debate.²

This study parallels changes occurring within country music and the lives of its

² Norm Cohen, liner notes, Minstrels and Tunesmiths: The Commerical Roots of Early Country Music, John Edwards Memorial Foundation LP 109, 1981; D.K. Wilgus, "Foreward" Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez, ed. Bill C. Malone (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975) ix-xii; Charles Wolfe, "Towards a Contextual Approach to Country Music," Journal of Country Music Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1974): 66-67; Norm and Anne Cohen, "Folk and Hillbilly Music: Further Thoughts on Their Relation," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 13, No. 46 (Summer, 1977): 52-53.

listeners in the period between 1939 and 1954. As both a product and a reflection of evolutionary southern culture, country music responded to the social upheavals precipitated by World War II, adapting itself to the lyrical and musical preferences of its audience. Dividing country in six different sub-genres, this study demonstrates the music's various responses to the socio-cultural tumults experienced by its listeners. In doing so, this study will show how the years between 1939 and 1954 witnessed the modernization of country music, its evolution from a regional folk art form aimed at a white southern rural audience to a nationwide phenomenon seeking to expand its core of listeners beyond a regional folk base. This transformation occurred within the context of changes in audience demographics and listeners' preferences initiated by social and cultural developments. An investigation of changing performance styles demonstrates the process of acculturation into the American mainstream undergone by country music and its audience in the 1940s and early 1950s, while an examination of changes in the genre's lyrical subject matter reveals southerners' ambivalent feelings towards nationalization and the modernization of the South. While many embraced the economic benefits of modernization, others begrudged the social and economic consequences. Dividing country music into several sub-genres provides the means for discussing these varying viewpoints as well as explaining country music's expanding appeal.

Before gaining a nationwide audience in World War II, country music performers directed their product at a predominantly rural and regional audience of working-class southerners. Only in Texas, a southern state that underwent early

urbanization, did country performers consciously reach out to urban listeners. During the war, many members of the country music audience moved to urban areas; simultaneously, many urban listeners from around the country discovered country music. Displaying remarkable elasticity, the genre responded to these developments by adopting elements of urban country music (from the Southwest) as well as pop stylings. The four sub-genres that emerged in the postwar period offered novel types of country music to one or more of the following groups: rural southerners, neo-urban southerners, urban middle-class listeners nationwide, and America's youth. This study traces the development of all six sub-genres as a means to explaining country music's appeal to these various demographic groups.

As a business, country music never existed in a cultural vacuum. Soon after its inception in the early 1920s, the process of commercialization began to dilute the music's southern "folk" qualities. A product of centuries of ethno-cultural, interregional, and rural-urban interaction, the music genre was never a pure folk cultural product. Additionally, with male performers dominating the early period, country music neglected much of the music heard in southern homes and churches at the time. In the 1930s, country music directed itself more towards this domestic tradition, but it also embraced musical experimentation, moving away from folk simplicity. These developments reflected early efforts to promote the acceptance of the genre beyond the rural South. Chapter One, dealing with the domestication of country music and the emergence of the progressives in the late thirties and early

forties, examines performers' efforts to reach a wider audience and gain respectability for their music.

When country music recordings started selling in large quantities to a national audience during World War II, efforts to enhance the genre's reputation stepped up dramatically. This movement took many forms, from changing the way performers dressed to altering the music itself (by making it more palatable for new listeners). In the postwar period, many acts reasserted country's southern roots, enjoying a peaceful coexistence with acts that downplayed the genres regional and rural characteristics. With country music's profits increasing every year and record companies growing more interested in the music, however, efforts to de-emphasize country music's southernness intensified. When rockabilly emerged as a formidable threat to the genre, its regional and rustic characteristics fell by the wayside. Ironically, country music eventually achieved the respectability it sought so earnestly since the 1930s by turning its back on the listeners (rural and working class southerners) who ensured its early survival.

The following analysis of changing musical styles and lyrical themes placed in the context of developments in southern society demonstrates that changes in country music reflected four major trends: fluctuations in the popularity of country music sub-genres over the period, reflecting modifications in audience tastes and changes in southern society brought about by World War II; a sophistication of country music and an alteration of sub-genre musical styles catalyzed by country music industry trends and the expansion of the country music audience to urban and non-southern areas; an

amalgamation of country music styles with one another and with American popular music and the subsequent emergence of alternative sub-genres emphasizing country music's southernness; and the emergence of Nashville as the hub of country music and a concurrent decrease in the relative importance/influence of other centers. The beginning of the study period (1939) represents the year that the Grand Ole Opry (soon to become country music's most prominent radio show) received network status, while 1954 coincides with the beginning of the rock and roll era. Six out of seven of the chapters trace the transformation of country music sub-genres prominent in the period: progressive country, western swing, post-war traditional, honky-tonk, country fusion (country-pop and country-blues). The remaining chapter deals with a specific period, World War II, and the effects of that era on country music.

The six sub-genres listed above do not represent completely homogeneous musical styles; one finds a variety of approaches to each field. Just as bluegrass musicians played different styles of bluegrass, individual honky-tonk performers approached their music in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, a recognizable hybrid exists within each sub-genre. Carl Smith and Hank Williams performed in very distinct styles, yet both belong beneath the honky-tonk umbrella. The same applies to the other sub-genres. As a last caveat, one needs to be aware that the basic terminology for these six sub-fields is essentially modern. Bob Wills played western swing in the late 1930s, but no one called it that until the mid-forties. Similarly, bluegrass and honky-tonk did not receive their common labels until well after the styles developed. Most of the fifty performers chosen for study simply considered

themselves hillbilly, country, or old-time performers. Some refused categorization as country performers, others preferred any label except hillbilly. In hindsight, historians can clearly see the development of distinct sub-genres in the period, although the appropriate placement of performers within them can elicit debate, as can nomenclature. Breaking country music down into individual sub-genres provides a viable model for discussing how the dynamic genre responded to cultural changes.

Primary sources used for this study include trade magazines, interviews, and, most importantly, commercial country music recordings made between 1939 and 1954. Contemporary trade magazines include The Billboard, Variety, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder, and Capitol News. Additionally, the examination of various newspaper articles and songbooks from the period provides the basis to gauge trends in country music and attitudes towards it. The vast majority of interviews and recordings are located in the Country Music Foundation's (CMF) collection of 78/45 r.p.m. records and in the CMF's Oral History Collection. The Foundation houses over ninety-seven percent of the country music selections that made the Billboard charts in the period, and ninety-eight percent of the complete catalog of recordings made by the fifty most prominent performers within the time frame. Published discographies provide an index of most artists' recording output; Billboard's weekly list of single releases provided the information necessary to compile a list of the remaining performers' recordings. With the inauguration of a country music jukebox column in 1942, The Billboard became the first national publication to recognize the significance of the country music phenomenon. As the principal trade paper to which retailers,

promoters, and disc jockeys turned to for information about singers and their recordings, Billboard provides a wealth of information about contemporary attitudes as well as industry trends. Published biographies of contemporary performers furnish additional information about the most significant performers in each sub-genre.

Within each chapter dealing specifically with the six country music sub-genres, one will find a lyrical analysis of the ten most significant performers in each field as well as biographical sketches of these artists and a discussion of their role in each sub-genre's development over the period. In some cases, performers played an important role in the modernization of country music, in others they contributed to the maturation of a specific sub-field, the popularity of which either peaked or plummeted during the era. The discussion of each sub-genre's musical and lyrical profile placed in historical context explains the reasons for the fluctuations in a sub-genre's success. The criteria for selecting the ten most significant performers in each field involved a consideration of retail sales success and the artist's contribution to a sub-field's development. The proliferation of post-war fusionists necessitated their sub-categorization into country-blues and country-pop, with six artists chosen in each. The fact that two artists played important roles in the evolution of two different sub-genres brought the total number of performers analyzed to fifty (Table 1). Gauging the popularity of each sub-genre during the 1940s and early 1950s poses several problems. The most basic means to measuring these fluctuations involves an analysis of the Billboard charts that measured the retail sales and radio/jukebox plays of country music selections. As the nation's premier musical trade publication,

Table 1: Predominant Country Music Performers, by Sub-Genre, 1939-1954

<u>Progressive</u>	<u>Western Swing</u>
Roy Acuff	Bill Boyd
Blue Sky Boys	Cliff Bruner
Callahan Brothers	Spade Cooley
Carlisle Brothers	Tommy Duncan
Jimmie Davis	Bob Dunn's Vagabonds
Delmore Brothers	Leon McAuliffe
Mainer's Mountaineers	Hank Penny
Bill Monroe	Hank Thompson
Morris Brothers	Tex Williams
Shelton Brothers	Bob Wills
<u>Post-War Traditional</u>	<u>Honky-Tonk</u>
Bailes Brothers	Lefty Frizzell
Flatt and Scruggs	Hank Locklin
Jim and Jesse	Webb Pierce
Johnnie and Jack	Ray Price
Grandpa Jones	Carl Smith
Louvin Brothers	Floyd Tillman
Bill Monroe	Ernest Tubb
Molly O'Day	Kitty Wells
Reno and Smiley	Hank Williams
Stanley Brothers	Faron Young
<u>Country-Pop</u>	<u>Country-Blues</u>
Eddy Arnold	Delmore Brothers
Red Foley	Tennessee Ernie Ford
Pee Wee King	Maddox Brothers and Rose
George Morgan	Moon Mullican
Hank Snow	Elvis Presley
Jimmy Wakely	Merle Travis

The Billboard was the first major periodical to measure the success of country music recordings with its inception of a jukebox popularity chart in 1944.

Unfortunately, little consistency existed in the number of selections, ranging between two and fifteen per week over the period. Unlike today's computer-calculated charts, the early Billboard tabulations were rudimentary at best. The small number of selections on the charts excluded several recordings that enjoyed considerable sales success. In 1946, for example, the author of Billboard's country music column reported that Ernest Tubb's "There's a Little Bit of Everything in Texas" had sold over 200,000 copies, yet it never made the magazine's jukebox popularity list. Additionally, several artists sold thousands of records on a sub-regional scale that never appeared on the national charts. Nevertheless, a rather crude analysis of fluctuations in each sub-genre's popularity can be ascertained using the Billboard listings by awarding points to the top twenty-five singles of each year on a high-low basis (e.g., number one given twenty five points, number twenty five given one point). Categorizing each of the top twenty-five songs of each year into a specific musical category (country-pop, country-blues, etc.) provided the means for measuring a sub-genre's annual success (Figure 1). For the period 1939-1943, when no Billboard charts existed, the approximated charts of Charles Faber were used to assign points. Faber estimated these charts based on the reissuance of recordings and the frequency in which the songs appear in country music anthologies and standard publications. While admittedly subjective, Faber's charts appear to be reasonably accurate. A discussion of the reasons for the fluctuations in sub-genres' popularity follows in

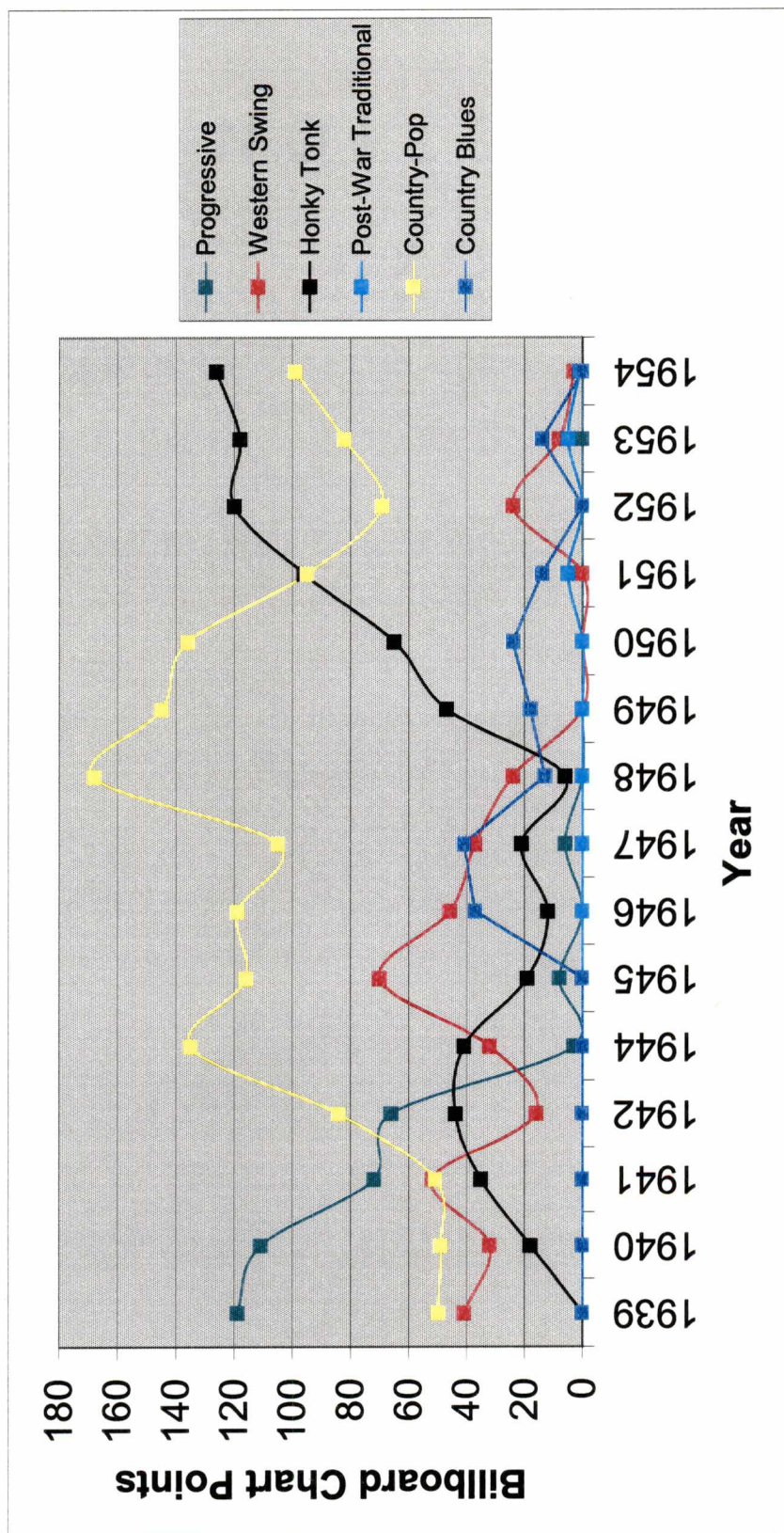


Figure 1: Popularity of Country Music Sub-Genres, 1939-1954

Sources: Charles Faber, The Country Music Almanac: 1922-1943, Volume One (Lexington: Charles F. Faber, 1978) 59-60; Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996); "Best Selling Country and Western Records—1946-1953," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 52 (22 May 1954): 19; "1954's Top Country and Western Records...according to Retail Sales," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 52 (25 December 1954): 17.

the appropriate chapters.³

In addition to explaining fluctuations in the popularity of musical styles, this study also discusses the appeal of different lyrical themes over the course of the period. When it comes to country music, the lyric's the thing that draws an audience more than anything else. Speaking of lessons learned throughout a long life as procurer and producer of country music dating back to the early 1920s, Art Satherley noted that "it is not the guy that can sing the best that can get you the best results; it's the guy that's got words and the lyrics that the people will accept." In country music, the tune nearly always plays second fiddle to the words, resulting in the primacy of the story over the song, the message over the musicianship.⁴

There are many ways to define country music, but most of the genre's performers usually do so in the context of its lyrical qualities. Hank Snow once observed that "(country music) tells a story of the people, to the people...it tells stories of everyday life." The country music lyric bases itself primarily in realism, in the mundane, and in some cases, the unspeakable. Webb Pierce commented: "It tells a story about life, the way it is. I always tried to sing about something that all people

³ Ronnie F. Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 105; Figure 1 generated from information in Charles Faber, The Country Music Almanac: 1922-1943, Volume One (Lexington: Charles F. Faber, 1978) 59-60 and Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996), "Best Selling Country and Western Records—1946-1953," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 52 (22 May 1954): 19, and "1954's Top Country and Western Records...according to Retail Sales," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 52 (25 December 1954): 17.

⁴ Art Satherley, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hollywood, June 27, 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

have done, but never talked about, but when they heard the song, that became an emotional outlet." In essence, Ray Price points out, "country music is music expressing deep feelings of folks in areas pertaining to their work...their religious experience...their ups and downs, joys and disappointments...It concerns everyday happenings about everyday people about things that touch directly on them." To Roy Acuff, "it's the music of our people and our places." Johnny Cash recently summed up the subject matter of most country songs:

I love songs about horses, railroads, land, judgment day, family, hard times, whiskey, courtship, marriage, adultery, separation, murder, war, prison, rambling, damnation, home, salvation, death, pride, humor, piety, rebellion, patriotism, larceny, determination, tragedy, rowdiness, heartbreak and love.

Finally, Maybelle Carter had this to say about the genre's primary lyrical concerns:

Country music reflects to us a way of life...When we sang, we sang of people and places that were familiar to us...when we sang, we sang of problems—hard work, poverty and sorrow—problems that were part of everyday life...when we sang, we sang of hopes and prayers...And when we sang, we sang to others who knew the same people, places, and problems, and who had the same hopes and prayers.⁵

⁵ Hank Snow quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 912; Webb Pierce quoted in Mindy Tate, "Hall of Fame Award Goes to Pierce," Brentwood Journal 19 September 1990; Ray Price quoted in Alton Brooks, "Golf, Horses, and Country Music," WENO Country (November 1967), Ray Price Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Roy Acuff with William Neely, Roy Acuff's Nashville: The Life and Good Times of Country Music (New York: Putnam, 1983) 10; Johnny Cash, liner notes, Unchained, American Recordings

No understanding of country music subject matter could be complete without a description of the environment that nurtured its productivity. While some scholars have pointed out that early country music attracted a national rural audience, the fact remains that the majority of the genre's procreators hailed from the South.

Figure 2 indicates that approximately seventy-four percent of country music performers who placed at least one record on the Faber/Billboard charts between 1939 and 1954 were born in the South. Of performers with three or more charted singles in the period, the South produced about seventy-nine percent (Figure 3). Of the southern states, Texas and Tennessee bore the largest percentage of chartmakers, particularly in the three or more category. These figures demonstrate that the majority of successful country music performers (in terms of record sales and radio/jukebox popularity) were of southern origin.⁶

What, then, of the land that produced these country music stylists? The South of this study is comprised of the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. This study considers the South as a cultural entity, defined in greater part by its distinctiveness in manner and thought than

CD CT 69404, 1996; Maybelle Carter, introduction, Fifty Years at the Grand Ole Opry, by Myron Tassin and Jerry Henderson (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1975) 11.

⁶ Figures 2 and 3 generated from information in Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits and Barry McCloud, et al., Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers (New York: Perigee, 1995).

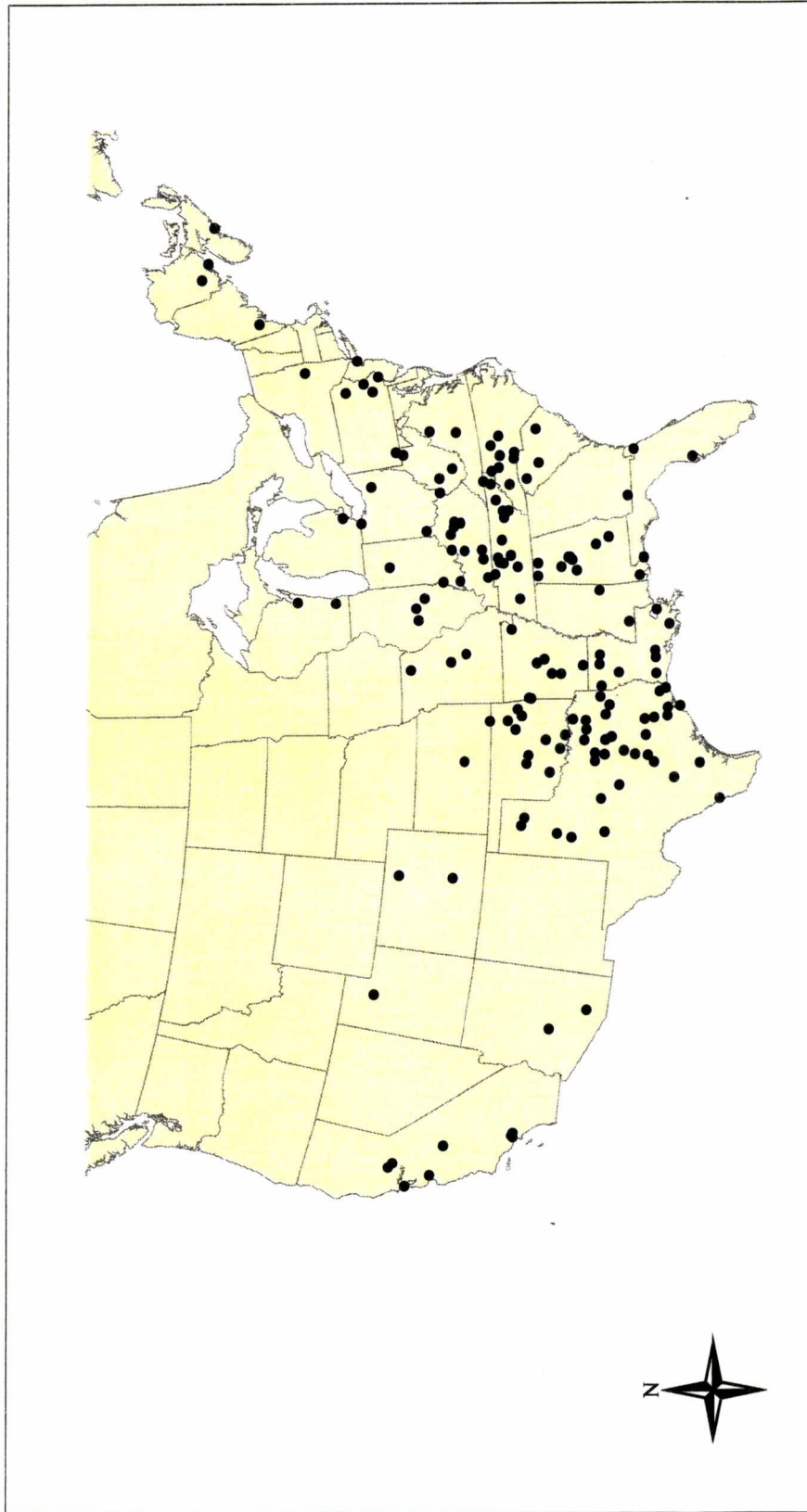


Figure 2: Birthplaces of Country Music Performers With One or More Charted Singles, 1939-1954

Sources: Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996); Barry McCloud, et al., Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers (New York: Perigee, 1995).

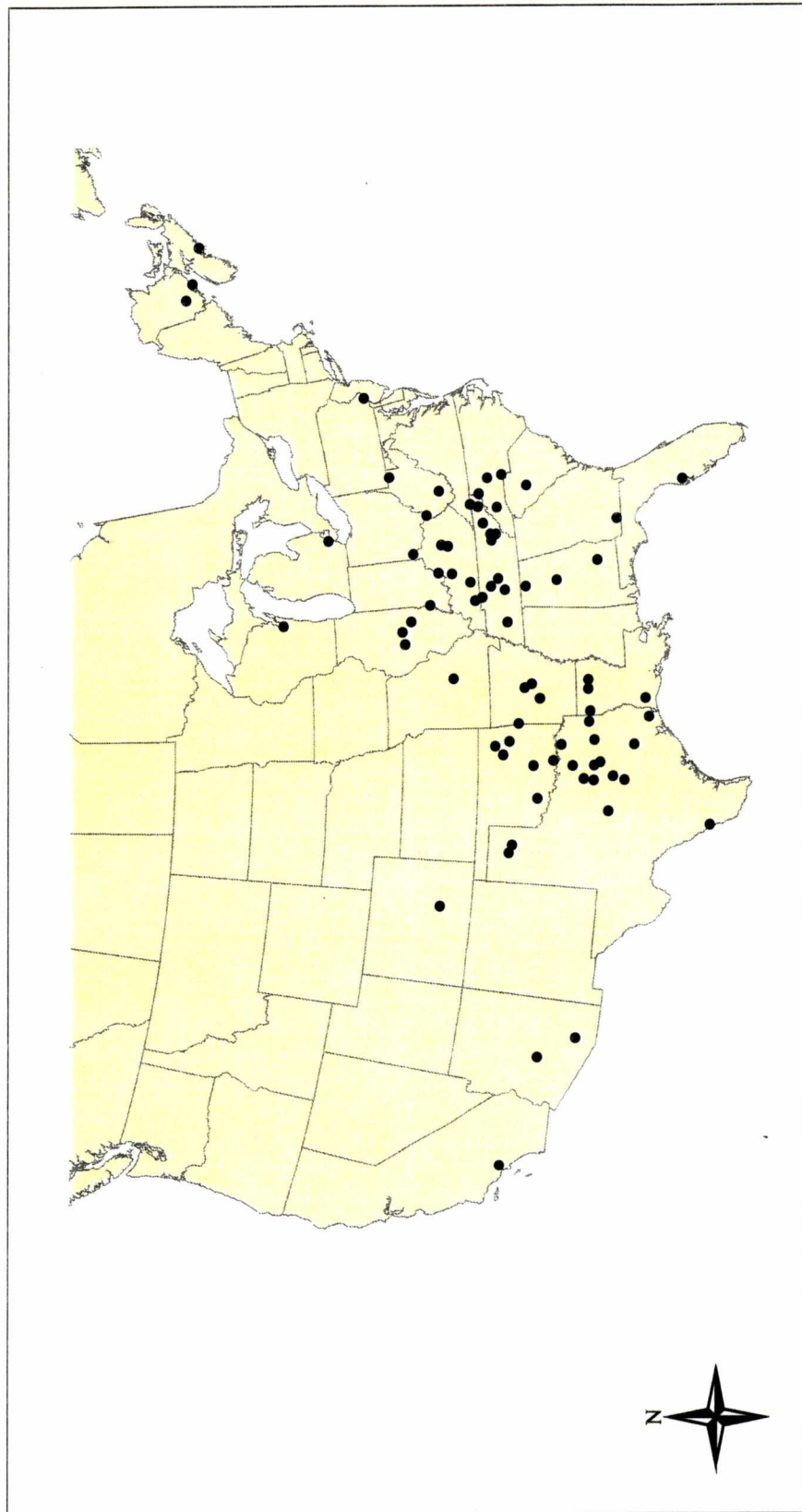


Figure 3: Birthplaces of Country Music Performers With Three or More Charted Singles, 1939-1954

Sources: Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996); Barry McCloud, et al., Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers (New York: Perigee, 1995).

by geographical boundaries. Several scholars over the years have dissected southern distinctiveness using this paradigm. Wilbur Zelinsky points out the “The South is ostensibly a cultural rather than physical entity, being simply an area occupied by a population that thinks and behaves distinctively.” Writing near the beginning of this study period, W. J. Cash noted:

There exists among us by ordinary (people)—both North and South—a profound conviction that the South is another land, sharply differentiated from the rest of the American nation, and exhibiting within itself a remarkable homogeneity.

Cash refers to a shared mindset among southerners shaped by historical experience and the evolution of regional folkways. George Tindall maintains that several factors such as climate, an African American presence, a powerful religious heritage, persistent rurality, and a distinct history produced the “southern” phenomenon. Other scholars, such as Charles Roland and John Shelton Reed, add such factors as common speech patterns, diet, and the persistence of rural/folk values to the equation. The discussion of lyrical themes in country music songs of the 1940s and early 1950s expounds on these cultural traits and demonstrate the ways in which the music produced by white rural southerners in the period reveal consistencies in southern culture as well as alterations in it brought about by socio-economic change.⁷

⁷ Wilbur Zelinsky, “Where the South Begins: The Northern Limit of the CIS-Appalachian South in Terms of Settlement Landscape,” Social Forces Vol. 30, No. 2 (December 1951): 172; W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (1941; Vintage Books, 1991) vii; George Tindall, Ethnic Southerners (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976) 86; Charles Pierce Roland, The Improbable Era: The South

This study uses 1939 as its starting point on the southern culture continuum. In its relative isolation from American society, the rural South of the pre-war years remained immersed in folk tradition. The South's persistent rurality facilitated an agrarian mindset that shaped a folk culture increasingly distinguishable within an urbanizing nation. As David Potter notes, "the culture of the folk survived in the South long after it succumbed to the onslaught of urban-industrial culture elsewhere." Defined by E. B. Reuter as "the simpler, uneducated and less sophisticated members of a population," the "folk" and their culture persevered the South largely due to their isolation from the American mainstream and their substantiality in number.⁸

Tables 2, 3, and 4 indicate that if folksiness can be equated with lack of sophistication, the South of the 1940 can certainly be described by and large as a folk society. Less than half of all dwellings occupied by white southerners in 1940 were equipped with working indoor plumbing. Less than one-quarter of white Southerners' homes in rural areas had working toilets and sinks; only forty-one percent had electricity. The fact that nearly two-thirds of white southerners lived in rural areas in 1940 compounds the importance of these statistics. More of an indicator of folk culture than a defining factor, a lack of sophistication helps to statistically pinpoint

Since World War II (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975) 2-9; John Shelton Reed, One South: An Ethnic Approach to Regional Culture (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982) 17-171; John Shelton Reed and Benjamin K. Hunnicutt, "Leisure," Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 1208-1209.

⁸ David M. Potter "The Enigma of the South," Yale Review Vol. 51, No. 1 (1961): 150; Edward B. Reuter, Handbook of Sociology (New York: The Dryden Press, 1941) 118.

Table 2: Percentage of Occupied Dwellings of White Southerners
Reporting Indoor Plumbing (Not in Need of Major Repairs)--1940

	With Working Indoor Plumbing	Without Working Indoor Plumbing
White South	45	55
Metropolitan Districts (50,000 +)	80	20
Urban	81	19
Rural	23	77

Table 3: Percentage of Occupied Dwellings of White Southerners Reporting
Electricity--1940

	With Electricity	Without Electricity
White South	61	39
Metropolitan Districts (50,000 +)	94	6
Urban	93	7
Rural	41	59

Table 4: Percentage of Occupied Dwellings of White Southerners
With Radio--1940

	With Radios	Without Radios
White South	70	30
Metropolitan Districts (50,000 +)	89	11
Urban	87	13
Rural	60	40

Source: United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Housing—General Characteristics (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1943) Tables 6, 8, and 10.

folk societies more than it does to describe them. Many folk societies (including the pre-war rural South) are rich in tradition and estimable in cultural values; labeling the rural South “unsophisticated” merely states the condition in which the culture developed. In any event, as the majority of country music performers and listeners in 1940 hailed from rural, southern areas, it stands to reason that the genre was primarily a product of folk culture intended for a folk audience. Country music’s popularity certainly transcended regional borders and even crept into several cities, but hillbilly music in 1940 was essentially a folk phenomenon.⁹

As a derivative of southern folk culture, country music bore a semblance to many characteristics of white southern society. In 1947, Howard Odum observed that “the way of the South...is the way of the folk, symbolic of what the people feel, think, and do as they are conditioned by their cultural heritage and the land which Nature has given them.” Odum described folk culture as revolving around a sense of place, familialism, and social interdependence; to its southern version, he added ruralism, religiousity, and a reverence for the past. Another contemporary sociologist, Fred Voget, stressed the binary relationship of folk and urban societies, stating that “urban secularism and heterogeneity contrast sharply with folk sacredness and homogeneity.” Several other historians and sociologists, including C. Vann Woodward and John Shelton Reed stress the importance of a distinct historical experience and cognizance of regional differences when defining the culture of the modernizing South. Country

⁹ United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Housing—General Characteristics (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1943) Tables 6, 8 and 10.

music in 1939 reflected white southern folk values as well as regional and even sub-regional identifications. Bound together by a folk culture and a common historical experience, rural white southerners in 1939 found something familiar in country music that they could identify with on both an individual and collective scale.¹⁰

The first chapter discusses at length the characteristics of the folk culture prevalent in the rural South before World War II as a starting point on the southern culture continuum. Lawrence Levine maintains that “culture is not a fixed condition, but a process: the product of interaction between the past and present.” Sociologist Howard Odum termed culture “the sum total of all the processes and products of a given people and their society at any given time and region in which they grow up.” Southern culture exhibited a remarkable degree of fluidity in this period of veritable revolution in lifestyles while also displaying remarkable survival skills. Southern culture endured the onslaughts of nationalization and urbanization that threatened its very existence by using itself as a bastion against such threats. Southerners turned to their core value system as a means of sustaining a way of life that defined their very existence. Clifford Geertz views culture as a vehicle for people to “communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.” By viewing country music as a major exponent of southern culture, this study will demonstrate how southerners turned to the medium as a catharsis to their lives’ tumults. As the

¹⁰ Howard W. Odum, The Way of the South Toward the Regional Balance of America (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947) 61; Reed, One South, 43, 170-171; C. Vann Woodward, The Burden of Southern History (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) 19.

product of incessant change, southern culture would not survive the period unaltered; southern music, however, helped to insure that it would not emerge unduly adulterated.¹¹

As an entertainment medium, not all country music blatantly extolled southern culture's virtues. As professional musicians and singers, country music artists always kept an eye on ticket and record sales. One need only recognize the near-ubiquitous presence of comedy acts in country music road shows of the 1940s to understand the primacy of the entertainment aspect of the genre. In between songs about mother, infidelity, and love won and lost, country musicians from honky-tonkers to traditionalists inserted comedy acts into their performances. As comedienne Minnie Pearl points out, "what we were trying to do, right from the start was to entertain people and bring a measure of release and love and a little surcease from daily cares."¹²

In musical repertoire and lyrical inclination, some country music sub-genres (particularly western swing) functioned primarily as escapist vehicles for their working-class audience. Others intentionally displayed more seriousness in their approach and presentation. Bluegrass historian Robert Cantwell categorizes early

¹¹ Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 5; Howard Odum, The Way of the South, 70; Clifford Geertz quoted in Charles Reagan Wilson, introduction, Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, xvi.

¹² Minnie Pearl quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer and Don Bruce Together Present the History of Country Music: A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer and D. Burce Together, 1970) 154.

southern rural musical performances as “social and participatory, in which the lines between musician and audience were diffuse.” One can draw a similar conclusion about country music performances on the eve of World War II from the recollections of artists and listeners. In the period of this study, however, the gatherings in which southern whites congregated to hear country music became steadily less participatory as audiences became more introspective, particularly after the war. In essence, the country music audience turned inward at the expense of communality. This helps to explain why some sub-genres survived the period while others did not.¹³

The issue of changing attitudes and tastes raises the question of what attracted country music audiences to certain sub-genres and not others. Throughout this study, the matter of authenticity occasionally appears as an answer to that question. Defined forthrightly by Richard Peterson as the product of believability and originality, authenticity centers around the connection listeners feel toward performers. The ability of country musicians to forge this bond helped distinguish the genre from popular music in the 1940s and played a major role in its remarkable success story over the course of the period. Country music performers exhibited their authenticity primarily through interaction with the audience and the selection/production of song lyrics immediately relateable to their listeners. Country music lyrics provide a mosaic of the southern social landscape in their description of southerners' relationships with one another, their land, and their God. The concept of authenticity helps explain why

¹³ Robert Cantwell, Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) 74.

progressive and post-war traditional performers attracted a greater portion of rural listeners, why honky-tonk emerged as the predominant post-war sub-genre, and why an expanding audience turned to the fusionists. While one can define the South as a distinct cultural entity, it is by no means a homogenous one. Within its mythical boundaries lies a complex myriad of hamlets and urban centers, of churches and barrooms, or ramshackle shacks and palatial homes. The southern mindset is an amalgam of hedonism and generosity, of violence and graciousness, of sullenness and celebrative excess. Country music not only captures the dichotomies of the South and its inhabitants, it thrives on it. A country musician's ability to reach his/her audience and to speak to their daily concerns and perpetual beliefs often determined the degree of his/her success. The dynamic nature of country music in the 1940s and early 1950s allowed it to adapt to cultural developments while retaining its authenticity. The inherent subjectivity of authenticity, however, splintered the genre's audience into those who embraced changes in musical and lyrical styles and those who resisted prevailing trends.¹⁴

Beyond presentation and song selection, country musicians substantiated their authenticity by displaying a colloquial manner of speech and acceptable visual appearance. Roy Acuff once said that "if you aren't a country boy, you can't write or sing country music." Beyond the gender bias, there lies a considerable amount of truth in that statement in terms of authenticity. Hank Williams stated the case more

¹⁴ Richard A. Peterson, Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 220.

bluntly:

You got to know a lot about hard work. You got to have smelt a lot of mule manure before you can sing like a hillbilly. The people who have been raised something like the way the hillbilly has knows what he is singing about and appreciates it.

Historian Bill Malone elaborates on the performer/audience bond: "The music reflected the kind of life we shared, and it was performed by people like ourselves who could have, and often did, come out of our own communities." Most performers did hail from small communities and the vast majority began their professional careers within familiar parameters, mostly via informal gatherings or local radio shows where they often performed without pay.¹⁵

Those fortunate enough to make it as professionals often discovered that the proper image often secured their success. Some opted to don a western style of dress, others the guise of the country gentleman or country bumpkin. Some leaned toward a retro look, fostering an image of rugged individualism representative of the American cowboy. Others dressed in more casual attire, some in sport coats, some in suspenders and flannel shirts. In choosing an appropriate image, performers hoped to avoid alienation of a prospective audience on the one hand while sustaining the loyalty of

¹⁵ Roy Acuff quoted in Russell B. Nye, The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America (New York: Dial Press, 1970) 342; Hank Williams quoted in Rufus Jarman, "Country Music Goes to Town," Nation's Business Vol. 41, No. 2 (February 1953); Bill C. Malone, "Growing Up With Texas Country Music," What's Going On? (In Texas Folklore) Ed. Francis Edward Abernathy (Austin: Encino Press, 1976) 245.

core fans on the other. In 1940, the prospective audience might be listeners in another county or another southern state and, in a few cases, a national audience while the base consisted of loyal rural, working-class radio listeners and personal appearance regulars. By 1954, the prospective audience became ever-increasing national in scope while the base demographic became more urban, more sophisticated, and more middle-class. As the period wore on, the cowboy image increased in popularity among country music's most successful performers, many eager to separate themselves from the hayseed image of southerners prevalent among Americans in the pre-war years.

Female performers projected an image of women in country music that adhered more to prevailing stereotypes than estimable representations. Country music songs (performed by male and female performers) in the 1920s and 1930s accentuated the preconception of women as virtuous homebodies providing a refuge from the corrupting influences of secular society. The infamous tribute to mother reflected this projection of women more than anything else as did songs which placed females' roles squarely within the boundaries of southern womanhood. Gradually, however, as women gained more independence both in country music and in southern society (particularly due to the Depression and World War II), these stereotypes began to wane somewhat. A proliferation of songs about mother by male artists and song by female artists extolling southern female virtues continued after the war, but the war dealt a blow to the image of the docile and faithful female. A rising divorce rate and

new freedoms experienced by women opened the door to profiles of feminine strength and assertiveness that challenged earlier stereotypes. For the most part, women remained marginalized by the country music industry well into the 1950s, but a notable few served as vanguards to a feminist movement in country music that only recently has come to full fruition.

In addition to influencing the images chosen by performers, changes in southern society affected the lyrical content of country music songs. With audience expansion and demographic reshuffling came changes in listeners' tastes and lyrical theme preferences. Together with appropriate musical presentation, the choice of appealing lyrical subject matter determined the success of both an individual performer and a particular sub-genre. An in-depth examination of these two ingredients provides the key to understanding why a particular sub-genre's success peaked at one point in the study period instead of another. For instance, why did the progressive country category enjoy more popularity before and during the war than after; conversely, what brought about the mercurial success of honky-tonk after the war? This study addresses these questions by placing the popularity of each sub-genre within the context of country music trends and the background of southern history, and through a comparative analysis of lyrical theme prevalence in the six sub-genres.

The first step in analyzing country music songs by lyrical subject matter involves their placement into lyrical theme categories. Figure 4 lists the ten categories established for this project. An accurate profile of each sub-genre's lyrical orientation was ascertained by listening to at least ninety percent of the entire repertoire of the ten

Figure 4: Categories for Country Music Lyrical Themes

1-“For Now and Always”

--happy love songs; love declarations; promises of fidelity

2-“Walking the Floor”

--lovelorn, love lost; pleas for a lost love’s return/forgiveness

3-“I’ll Go on Alone”

--breakup songs; mutual incompatibility

4-“There Stands the Glass”

--first-person infidelity songs; drinking songs emphasizing self-pity

5-“Don’t Fence Me In”

--songs of rugged individualism; work/cowboy songs; rambling/prison songs

6-“That’s What I Like About the South”

--songs of home, mother and childhood; nostalgic songs emphasizing the pastoral South; songs emphasizing traditional values

7-“Jambalaya” and “Mountain Dew”

--comedy/novelty songs; the quaint South; children’s songs

8-“Last Letters” and “Loose Talk”

--topical songs; death songs; social commentary

9-“Cryin’ Holy Unto My Lord”

--religious/gospel songs

10-Breakdowns and Boogies

--instrumentals; dance songs; songs about the musician’s life

most significant performers in each field and assigning numbers representative of lyrical categories to individual songs. The period of greatest popularity of a sub-genre determined the time frame for recordings selected for analysis. For progressive country music, this included all releases 1939-1945; for western swing, 1939-1954; for post-war traditional, honky-tonk, country-pop and country-blues, 1946-1954. Two important considerations require mention. First, these lists do not take into account the radio and live performance repertoire of performers, two important aspects of their career. Second, while these singles are indicative of trends within each sub-genre, the process of choosing performers involved a considerable amount of subjectivity. An artist's notability in each field, chart success, and impact on the sub-genre's maturation influenced the selection of performers studied. Ultimately, sub-genre definition determined the placement of performers. For instance, Lefty Frizzell falls within the definition of honky-tonk, Red Foley within the parameters of the country-pop definition, etc.. Two performers do not fit as neatly into the sub-fields as others do. Hank Snow could easily be placed in the honky-tonk or even in the post-war traditional category, but in terms of vocal style and musical accompaniment he conforms to the country-pop model. Similarly, many view Merle Travis as a honky-tonk or a western swing performer, but in examining his entire repertoire, he fits into this study's definition of country-blues. Because instrumental selection/use and vocal style were the primary determinants for establishing these musical categories, lyrical subject matter was not considered as a defining factor in musical style or in the selection of performers analyzed within each sub-field.

In addition to defining distinctions between the six country music sub-genres, this study also assesses the popularity of country music subject matter over the period. This evaluation involved the lyrical analysis of all country music releases making the Faber/Billboard charts in the period and assignment of numbers corresponding to the categories listed above. Figure 5 shows the percentage of each lyrical theme category on the charts for each year, 1939-1954.¹⁶

Katie Letcher Lyle notes that "given the circumstances of southern rural life...the themes of hillbilly music are fairly predictable as reflections of reality." This study separates country music's observations on everyday life into ten categories. Selections most forthrightly described as happy love songs fall into category 1. In addition to love proclamations, these selections often include songs of courtship and in some cases pledges of fidelity in the face of separation. The singer can convey these feelings in either a serious or a humorous manner, but the humor in the lyric never overshadows the declaration of love. These songs generally became more popular as the period progressed.

Songs about lost love fit into category 2. Generally acknowledged as the most popular of country music lyrical themes, lost love selections dominated the charts in only four of the sixteen years covered in this study period. In these songs, the singer's love has left him/her, and the narrator pleads for the love's return or tells the audience of the pain the lost love has caused. The singer displays little anger towards the other,

¹⁶ Figure 5 generated from information in Faber, Country Music Almanac and Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits.

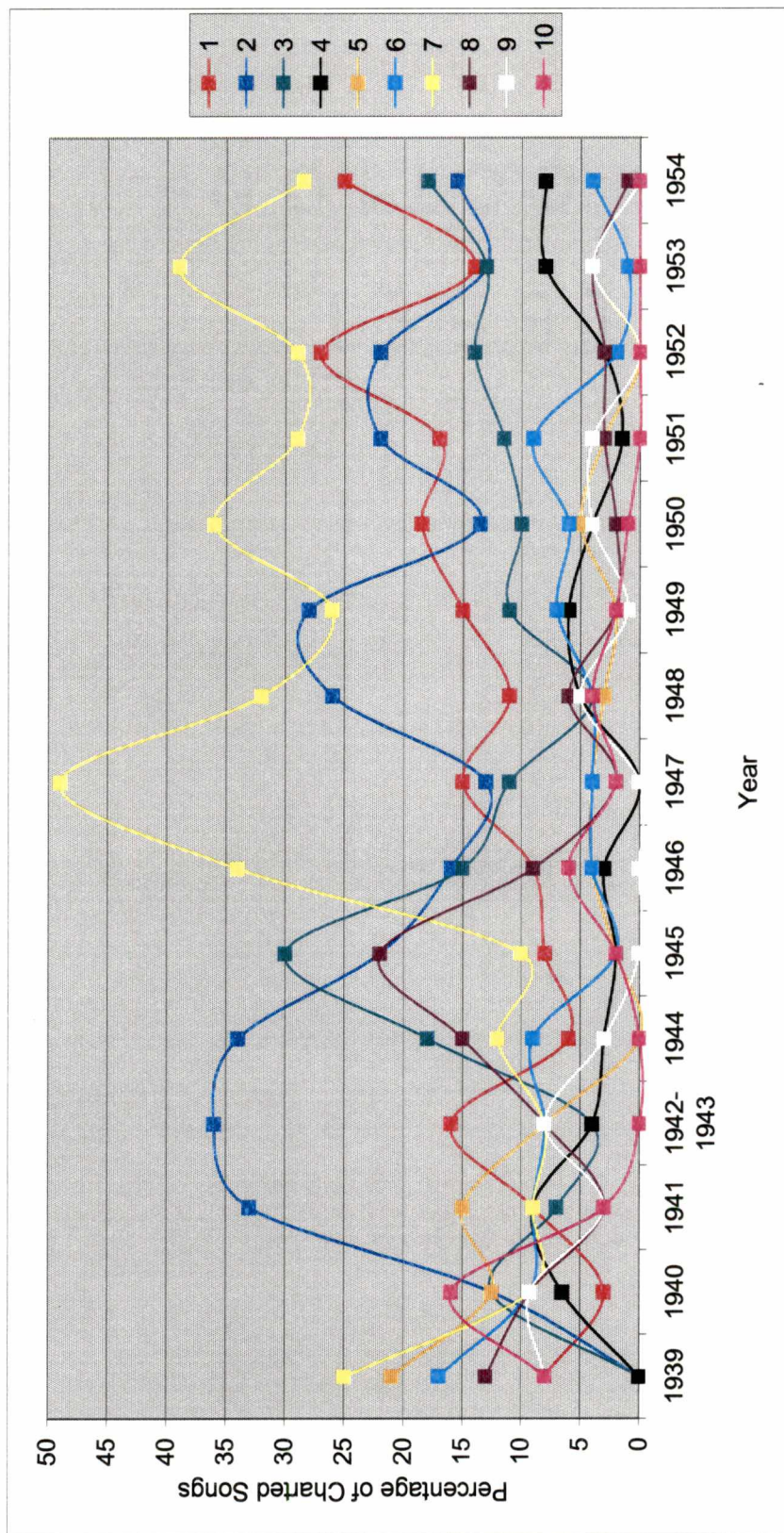


Figure 5: Percentage of Country Songs Appearing On Charts, 1939-1954: By Lyrical Category*

Sources: Charles Faber, The Country Music Almanac: 1922-1943, Volume One (Lexington: Charles F. Faber, 1978); Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996).

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

sometimes blaming himself/herself for the breakup. All causes for breakup except infidelity on narrator's part are included in this category.

In selections assigned to category 3, the singer blames the other lover for the breakup or expresses relief for the separation. In some cases, a mutual understanding of the incompatibility of the two persons involved provides the storyline, but more often, the singer displays anger or refuses to feel the pain of the breakup. Songs commenting on the battle of the sexes also fall into this category. Not surprisingly, these songs dominated the charts in 1946, a year that witnessed a staggering rise in the divorce rate.

The narrator in songs in category 4 has either committed adultery (usually divulged through the phrase "broken vow") or has succumbed to the temptations of the honky-tonk. Songs that emphasize drinking as an escape from trouble also belong in this category. A generous amount of remorse or self-pity pervades these songs, sometimes bringing the singer to the brink of suicide. Generally considered honky-tonk songs, this study will demonstrate that they do not exist exclusively in the honky-tonk musical genre.

Category 5 encompasses songs about work, prison, and rambling. Cowboy songs recorded by country artists fall under the umbrella of work songs. Songs about drifters expressing feelings of alienation from society or persons driven to rambling by lost love can also be included in this category. In general, train songs fall into category 6, but songs in which the singer views the train as a vehicle for escape belong in this classification. Today, prison songs connote negative images unappealing to the

current country music audience, but fifty years ago songs about life in jail had considerable acceptance. The popularity of Jimmie Rodgers and other artists of the thirties influenced by the blues (discussed in chapter one) had a great deal to do with this phenomenon. As the cowboys singers' and Jimmie Rodgers' popularity began to wane, so too did the frequency of chart appearances of songs under this classification. Changes in audience demographics similarly affected the prevalence of work, prison, and rambling songs.

Songs in category 6 celebrate the virtues of southern homelife and the visceral appeal of the pastoral South. Here one can find selections expressions of love for mother and homeland, two bastions against the corrupting influences of modernization. In some cases, the narrator has been pulled away by war, sometimes by city attractions, other times by wanderlust. In any event, he/she looks back on the home left behind longingly, often sentimentally. Songs praising the beauty of the southern landscape fall into this classification, from natural visions to supernatural images of trains. W.J. Cash observed that "The South...is itself an extravagant and vivid and even more than life-sized land." Many country songs from this period lend credence to this observation with romantic images of the region's countryside. Some times the narrator nostalgically recalls happier times as a child, on other occasions he ponders hopping a train back home. Occasionally, a singer will juxtapose the virtues of homelife to the corrupting influences of the city or will point out an ill in society and suggest a revival of traditional values as a panacea. Songs from a child's point of view also fall into this category. Here again one will find subtle social commentary,

as the child laments the divorce of his/her parents, or asks them about inconsistencies in society that he/she cannot understand. At other times, the singer recalls playing as a child, or celebrates the birth of one.¹⁷

Songs specifically aimed at young listeners belong to category 7, although most recordings in this group include comedy and novelty selections marketed for an adult audience. Songs that view the southern social landscape in a fanciful way comprise the majority of selections in this category. The narrator usually employs exaggerated imagery to create a whimsical mood for the listener. Here one can find a cornucopia of stereotypical southern characters drinking moonshine and engaging in various acts of hedonism. Generally, these songs display more jocularity than disparagement, the images leaning more towards comical caricature than condescension. Sometimes these songs simply celebrate life, whether through courtship or communal celebration. The characters in these songs find humor in their folkways and feelings, and immodestly acquaint the listener with both their virtues and shortcomings. The singers generally recount their stories in an effort to create a light-hearted ambiance. Twenty-eight percent of all selections making the Faber/Billboard charts between 1939 and 1954 fall into this category, making it the most popular lyrical theme of the period.

Category 8 can be viewed as the antithesis of category 7. Songs within this classification deal with death, the consequences of war, and the ills of society. These social commentaries are unambiguous, with a clear message sent to listeners. Graphic

¹⁷ Cash, Mind of the South, 388.

and often gothic images fill the selections concerning war and death. Occasionally, the dying are viewed as heroic figures, virtuous and innocent; many times, the victims are children. At times, these songs deal with life in wartime, sometimes extolling patriotism and other times lamenting the inevitabilities of war. On rare occasions, the singer will bring up issues of race and gender to protest economic conditions. More often, however, the narrator will comment on imperfections in society, such as the consequences of gossip and the immorality of divorce.

The religious songs within category 9 sometimes point out a societal shortcoming, but do so by juxtaposing earthly existence with a heavenly afterlife. These songs often invoke the promise of a better life in the hereafter as a means to surviving present tribulations. Other times the singer invites listeners to join him/her in a celebration of the Divinity. Many selections within this category date back to earlier centuries, although many are of more recent, even contemporary origin. Sometimes the singer warns a sinning listener of the coming of Judgment Day and encourages repentance, other times he/she will encourage the members of the audience to find strength in a heavenly power's omnipotence. Variations on religious themes also explore the means to enhancing one's faith. This type of song never comprised more than nine percent of the selections making the charts in any year of the study period, but in some cases they make up a considerable portion of the repertoires of predominant performers.

Selections classified in category 10 include instrumentals and songs about life as a musician. As country music became more lyric- and vocal-orientated in the late

1940s, instrumentals dropped in popularity in most sub-genres (bluegrass and western swing being the exceptions). In terms of chart appearance, songs within this category virtually disappeared from Billboard lists after 1950. Within the vocal-orientated honky-tonk and country-pop fields, instrumental selections seldom appeared in an artist's repertoire; on the other hand, they make up a greater portion of selections in sub-genres with a proclivity toward musicianship.

This study examines the prevalence of the ten lyrical themes within each musical sub-genre in an effort to demonstrate the musical fields' distinguishing characteristics. Coupled with a description of evolving musical styles placed in the context of industry trends, lyrical theme analysis helps to explain why the modernization of country music took place between 1939 and 1954. To a lesser extent, this study will place this phenomenon within the context of regional developments in an effort to demonstrate how country music's modernization reflected the modernization of southern society. Richard Peterson and Melton McLaurin argue that three factors preclude the use of country music lyrics as a means to accurately encapsulating the southern mindset: the absence of taboo subjects (such as race), record companies' influence on an artist's repertoire, and the artist's reluctance to stray from an existing image. Augmentation of lyrical theme examination with sub-genre musical analysis and a study of chart popularity patterns placed in the context of southern history, however, opens the door to viewing developments within country music as a barometer of broad changes in southern society. Merle Travis termed the evolution of country music lyrical themes as "part of

the revolution.” As a significant component of white southern culture, country music served as a vessel of indirect commentary on social developments. Exploring the reasons why it changed over the course of the period provides the basis for an understanding of how its audience changed as well.¹⁸

The country music audience in 1940 was overwhelmingly white, rural and working class. Country music performers in the late 1930s geared their lyrics and musical approach to this core audience. Southern urbanites displayed indifference to hillbilly music, at best tolerating its presence; occasionally, they became openly hostile to its performers. Over the course of the period this antagonism began to wane as country music grew in popularity among non-traditional listeners both outside the South and within southern cities. Simultaneously, many members of the traditional audience entered the middle class and settled in urban areas. The modernization of country music took place within the context of these evolving audience demographics; in essence, country music had to change in order to survive. The metamorphosis that occurred led to the emergence of more cosmopolitan country music styles and the transformation of more bucolic ones. Every country music sub-genre experienced some type of transformation during the period as a means to sustaining its appeal among an existing (but modified audience) or to gaining popularity among an expanding one.

¹⁸ Richard Peterson and Melton McLaurin, “Introduction”, You Wrote My Life: Lyrical Themes in Country Music, eds. Melton McLaurin and Richard Peterson (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1992) 6-7; Merle Travis, interview with Douglas B. Green, n.p., October 17, 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

While the country music audience was not exclusively southern, a look at how southern society evolved in the 1940s provides several clues as to why the modernization of country music took place within this period. Tables 5 and 6 show that the South of 1940 was predominantly rural; in fact, sixty-five percent of white southerners lived in areas of 2,500 inhabitants or less. Only about seventeen percent of urban southerners lived in cities with a population of 50,000 or more. By 1950 (Table 7 and 8), the percentage of white southerners residing in rural areas dropped from nearly two-thirds to just over one-half (fifty-three percent); simultaneously, the white population of large southern urban areas (50,000 or more) grew by five percent (from sixteen to twenty-one percent). The 1940s witnessed a period of massive white exodus from the southern countryside. Many came to cities looking for war-industry jobs, others experienced displacement off farms due to changes in southern agriculture. Some found a better life and entered the middling class, others encountered novel problems and struggled to achieve financial independence. Country music spoke to the urban integration sought by some and the alienation felt by others. Bill Malone notes that "its performers and audience were torn by opposing desires, clinging to a self-image of rustic simplicity while at the same time striving to be accepted in an urban, middle class milieu." Some country music sub-genres appealed to listeners seeking to break free from rustic roots, others drew an audience grappling with the rural/urban dichotomy. Many listeners who remained in the countryside still liked the old stuff, some preferred to hear it in a new way. As musical styles began to merge near the end of the period, the country music audience

Table 5: Population Distribution of White Southerners, 1940

State	Large Cities (50,000 +)	Urban	Rural	Total
Alabama	251,775	539,861	1,309,236	1,849,097
Arkansas	65,914	326,770	1,139,314	1,466,084
Florida	380,276	758,323	623,663	1,381,986
Georgia	357,134	693,653	1,344,625	2,038,278
Kentucky	330,725	732,456	1,898,969	2,631,425
Louisiana	406,921	665,464	846,275	1,511,739
Mississippi	37,851	254,538	851,789	1,106,327
North Carolina	230,945	674,588	1,893,047	2,567,635
Oklahoma	311,067	792,333	1,311,895	2,104,228
South Carolina	79,679	295,622	788,686	1,084,308
Tennessee	478,694	744,755	1,662,151	2,406,906
Texas	1,327,964	2,489,569	2,997,976	5,487,545
West Virginia	194,395	500,008	1,284,094	1,784,102
Virginia	317,694	703,295	1,312,288	2,015,583
Total	4,771,034	10,171,235	19,264,008	29,435,243

Table 6: Population Distribution of White Southerners (By Percentage), 1940

State	Large Cities (50,000 +)	Urban	Rural
Alabama	13.6	29.2	70.8
Arkansas	4.5	22.3	77.7
Florida	27.5	54.9	45.1
Georgia	17.5	34	66
Kentucky	12.6	27.8	72.2
Louisiana	27	44	56
Mississippi	3.4	23	77
North Carolina	9	26.3	73.7
Oklahoma	14.8	37.6	62.4
South Carolina	7.3	27.3	72.7
Tennessee	19.9	31	69
Texas	24	45.4	54.6
West Virginia	11	28	72
Virginia	16	34.9	65.1
Total	16	34.5	65.5

Source: United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population. Characteristics of the Population. United States Summary. (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1943) Tables 50 and Table 52.

Table 7: Population Distribution of White Southerners, 1950

State	Large Cities (50,000 +)	Urban	Rural	Total
Alabama	387,904	886,717	1,192,874	2,079,591
Arkansas	78,654	483,955	997,552	1,481,507
Florida	559,677	1,417,177	748,874	2,166,051
Georgia	418,647	1,067,911	1,312,666	2,380,577
Kentucky	414,067	956,494	1,785,596	2,742,090
Louisiana	563,225	1,022,931	773,752	1,796,683
Mississippi	58,080	374,320	814,312	1,188,632
North Carolina	336,291	1,005,744	1,977,377	2,983,121
Oklahoma	385,244	1,039,837	992,689	2,032,526
South Carolina	137,021	542,262	751,143	1,293,405
Tennessee	565,561	1,111,884	1,648,373	2,760,257
Texas	2,578,541	4,221,593	2,504,941	6,726,534
Virginia	488,053	1,222,973	1,358,582	2,581,555
West Virginia	205,160	647,039	1,243,243	1,890,282
Total	7,176,125	16,000,837	18,101,974	34,102,811

Table 8: Population Distribution of White Southerners (By Percentage), 1950

State	Large Cities (50,000 +)	Urban	Rural
Alabama	19	43	57
Arkansas	5	33	67
Florida	26	65	35
Georgia	17.5	45	55
Kentucky	15	35	65
Louisiana	31	57	43
Mississippi	5	31	69
North Carolina	11	34	66
Oklahoma	19	51	66
South Carolina	10.5	42	58
Tennessee	20	40	60
Texas	38	63	37
Virginia	19	47	53
West Virginia	11	34	66
Total	21	46.9	53.1

Source: Bureau of the Census. A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States. Census of the Population: 1950. Characteristics of the Population (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1952) Tables 15 and 33.

splintered into stratified groups drawn to the musical and lyrical nuances of the sub-fields.¹⁹

Country music was able to achieve its successful transformation from regional folk art form to national phenomenon through its ability to reach its listeners with musical styles and lyrical themes that appealed to changing tastes and lifestyles while holding steadfast to its original homespun approach. To an increasing number of Americans in the 1950s attracted to its honesty and unpretentiousness, country music offered an alternative to popular music's insipidity. Through its realistic depictions of everyday life, country music seemed to capture the essence of Americans' contemporary concerns. To many white southerners, it simply continued to be the music they grew up with, the music of their communities produced by men and women of similar cultural background. But the South had changed, and so had the music the region produced. This study chronicles the modernization of country music within the context of the transformation of southern society and explains the reasons why it occurred between 1939 and 1954.

¹⁹ Tables 6 and 7 generated from information in United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population. Characteristics of the Population. United States Summary. Tables 50 and Table 52; Table 8 and 9 generated from information in United States. Bureau of the Census. A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States. Census of the Population: 1950. Characteristics of the Population (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1952) Tables 15 and 33; Bill C. Malone, Southern Music, American Music (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979) 64.

PART I:
THE NATIONALIZATION OF COUNTRY MUSIC

CHAPTER 1—SCHOOLHOUSE SHOWS, RADIO BARN DANCES AND
“HILLBILLY” DOMESTICATION: THE RISE OF PROGRESSIVE
COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE PRE-WAR ERA

The initial stages of country music's modernization took place in a region on the verge of a social revolution. In 1939, the American South found itself amid social changes precipitated by the New Deal. Principally, the mechanization of southern agriculture accelerated the migration of southern sharecroppers to cities (both North and South) as farming became increasingly less labor-intensive. But the heyday of migration and mechanization was still on the horizon, and the South of the late 1930s closely resembled the South of the 1920s; many places within the region, in fact, looked as they did in 1900. Historian David Goldfield points out that on the eve of World War II “the South was still a rural, agrarian region in the midst of an urban, industrial nation. Its cities were modest and the characteristic urban settlement was the small town.” The vision of a “New South” proclaimed by Henry Grady in the late 1800s proved unfounded in 1939, not only in an economic sense, but in a socio-cultural one as well. While some elements of progressivism crept into southern cities, the hinterland remained predominantly unaffected by the early twentieth-century phenomenon. When the South began its major economic transformation in the 1930s, it hesitantly strolled into modernity unsure of the social costs. For the time being, the region remained sectionalized and undaunted by the cultural homogenization occurring on a national scale.¹

¹ David R. Goldfield, Promised Land: The South Since 1945 (Arlington Heights, H. Davidson, Inc., 1987) 1.

In its isolation from American society, the rural South clung to the values and customs that shaped its identity. For many rural white southerners, country music manifest their worldview as well as offering an avenue for entertainment. White southerners listened to country music because its lyrics captured the particulars of their lives while the music provided a means of congregation with friends and family. In their daily lives, country music listeners worked at a variety of manual labor jobs (from farming to mining) and lived in an assortment of dwellings (from comfortable homes to shanties). Merle Travis' recollection of life growing up in a coal-mining town in Kentucky captures the domestic surroundings of many country music listeners in the area:

Dad never owned a car, a horse or a mule from the time I was born and Mom never had any rugs for the floor, an ice box or anything more modern than a coal stove and five-gallon crock churn. We never had electricity or water-works and money was out of the question... We never had a bit of paint on the house... There was no locks on the door. And there was no inside plumbing. We got our water from a spring down the hill.

In northern Alabama, the Louvin Brothers' parents eked out a living as semi-subsistent farmers. The family hauled the cotton they plowed with mules to Chattanooga, and occasionally sold food crops locally for cash. Up the road in Elkmont, Alabama, the Delmore Brothers' parents worked the rocky red clay as tenant farmers. As a sharecropper's son, Johnny Cash recalls having to put in a full day's work picking

cotton upon reaching the age of twelve. Many families turned to moonshining to augment their meager earnings. Molly O'Day's mother was a deeply religious woman, but the family's economic situation necessitated her husband's selling moonshine to their neighbors in Pike County, Kentucky. In some cases, widows took to distilling and selling liquor to fend for their families. In western Tennessee, one woman earned a modest living of thirty dollars a week by acquiring liquor from a local moonshiner and then selling it at a fifty percent markup.²

White working-class southerners in the 1930s worked hard and maintained unsophisticated lifestyles. Social gatherings usually centered around family functions. Starved for entertainment, the announcement of a local dance or the performance of a musician passing through their town naturally appealed to them. White southerners looked upon music as an important social and religious part of their lives. Music could be heard everywhere: mothers sang old popular ballads around the house, men sang in the fields, children sang in schools, and everyone sang in church. Music often provided the impetus for domestic social gatherings, many taking place in parlors where families and friends removed furniture and rugs for dancing. Barbecues, house raisings, fish fries, candy-breakings, and corn-shuckings also provided the means for

² Merle Travis quoted in Rich Kienzle, Merle Travis: Guitar Rags and a Too Fast Past (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 4; Charles K. Wolfe, Louvin Brothers: In Close Harmony (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 2; Charles K. Wolfe, introduction, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity, by Alton Delmore (Nashville: Country Music Federation Press, 1995) ix; Johnny Cash, liner notes, Unchained, American Recordings CD CT 69404, 1996; Jack Temple Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 208-209; Ivan M. Tribe, liner notes, Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks, Bear Family CD BCD 15565, 1992.

social interaction, with omnipresent musicians furnishing the necessary milieu. Roy Acuff recalls the religious and social gatherings that he attended as “the only contact I had with the outside world” before his family acquired a radio.³

The radio itself provided another means for assembly, especially among those who could not afford the device. Southerners without radios often gathered at a local store on weekends to hear their favorite musical shows. Johnnie Wright recalls: “I remember that me and my brothers liked to go down to the store (and listen to the WSM Barn Dance). We’d lie there on one-hundred pound feedsacks and listen until the music stopped.” In the absence of radios, many people simply gathered around a local business in the evening to hear an impromptu performance by amateur local musicians. Music was everywhere, and southerners sang, played, and listened to it every chance they could get.⁴

To understand southerners’ fascination with regional music, one needs to appreciate its historical roots, which date back to the first settlements of the South. As

³ Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, 181; Suzy Lowry Geno, “Charlie and Ira—The Louvin Brothers,” Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 17, No. 9 (March 1983): 12; Robert Cantwell, Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) 74; Michael Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, Pioneer of the Nashville Sound (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997) 11-13; Bill C. Malone, “Country Music,” Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 1003; Roy Acuff with William Neely, Roy Acuff’s Nashville: The Life and Good Times of Country Music (New York: Putnam, 1983) 12.

⁴ Johnnie Wright quoted in Walt Trott, “The Johnnie and Jack Story,” Johnnie and Jack and the Tennessee Mountain Boys, by Eddie Stubbs and Walt Trott (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 3; Wayne Erbsen, “Wiley and Zeke: The Morris Brothers,” Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 1980): 40.

Bill Malone points out, "hillbilly music...evolved primarily out of the reservoir of folksongs, ballads, dances, and instrumental pieces brought to North American by Anglo-Celtic immigrants." Trans-Atlantic migrants brought this musical baggage (primarily oral in nature) to both the northern and southern colonies, but as the eighteenth century progressed it tended to remain more prevalent in southern social circles. The influx of non-British immigrants to the North in the mid-1800s certainly had a great deal to do with the erosion of Anglo folk music's presence in the region, as did northern urbanization. As D.K. Wilgus points out, "by the end of the eighteenth century, the North was receiving newer material and newer styles than the South and was under pressure to conform to emerging urban 'popular' styles and to accept the products of the growing urban commercial entertainment industry." The South, meanwhile, while neither ethnically homogenous nor without urbanization, maintained a preference for older, rural English musical styles. The folk culture that developed in the region as a result of its agrarian economy and sectional isolation fostered a music that tended to reaffirm conservative rural values. The presence of a variety of ethnic groups in the South (including Germans, Mexicans, Poles, French and especially African Americans) led to the dilution of the British musical matrix, but a substantial amount of the English legacy survived the eighteenth century.⁵

⁵ Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 1; William J. Ivey, foreward, Country Gentleman, by Chet Atkins with Bill Neely (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1974) viii; D. K. Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition, eds. Americo Paredes and Ellen J. Stekert (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971) 138; Bill C. Malone, "Music" Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 985.

The Civil War precipitated a course of events that fundamentally altered the nature of southern music and set the groundwork for its commercialization.

Immigration and emigration to and from the South increased cultural interaction while railroads advanced interregional communication. The South's economy remained primarily rural-based, but manufacturing and extracting industries began devoting more attention to opportunities within Dixie's borders. These developments laid the foundation for both the commercialization of southern music and the rise of professional musicians. Norm Cohen notes that "the surge in urbanization and industrialization provided both the means and the market for a mass-produced entertainment medium." Simultaneously, the products of northern songwriters penetrated the southern market, primarily through traveling medicine and minstrel shows.⁶

Often touring with nomadic circuses, the semi-professional minstrels introduced southerners to northern music while popularizing the African-derived banjo. Sometimes they performed alone at rural courthouses, other times they played in tandem with other musicians, initiating the string band sound with their conglomeration of fiddle, banjo, tambourines, and a variety of percussive instruments. Medicine shows also provided work for musicians, many of whom went on to become country music performers (e.g. Jimmie Rodgers, Uncle Dave Macon, Roy Acuff, and Hank Williams). The medicine show, Roy Acuff explains, "was the vaudeville of

⁶ Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," 139; Norm Cohen, "America's Music: Written and Recorded," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 16, No. 59 (Fall 1980): 124.

America's South, at least the small towns and hamlets of the South." This type of show often employed balladeers to sing many of the popular sentimental pieces popularized in the North near the end of the 1800s. Centered around New York's 28th Street, near Union Square, the song publishing houses of Tin Pan Alley provided the source for many of these ballads, many of which remained popular in the South well after the dance craze of the early 1900s diminished their popularity in the North. Postbellum war weariness and economic dislocation into farm tenancy drew many southerners to sentimental pieces of the Victorian era that appealed to their traditional value structure and penchant for nostalgia.⁷

Through exposure to professional entertainers and sheet music, southerners brought back home a considerable amount of commercial music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In their parlors, they played pianos and sang many Tin Pan Alley compositions. At frolics, country fiddlers began to augment their repertoire of Old World dance music with ragtime tunes, waltzes, and other products of popular entertainment. Musically, the guitar and mandolin (both increasingly available through mail-order catalogs) began to encroach on the popularity of the banjo and fiddle. The supremacy of the fiddle remained undaunted at public gatherings, but

⁷Cohen, "America's Music: Written and Recorded," 124-125; Charles K. Wolfe, Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977) 8; Bill C. Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers: Southern Culture and the Roots of Country Music (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993) 50-53, 57; Malone, Country Music U.S.A., 6; Acuff, Roy Acuff's Nashville, 35; Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," 140; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 16.

fiddlers increasingly sought the accompaniment of guitarists and banjoists for rhythmic purposes. Domestically, while many southern women continued to sing older folk songs and hymns acappella, more and more pianos and dulcimers entered their homes along with newer song material.⁸

By 1920, southern music represented the product of three centuries of ethnic intermingling and approximately fifty years of exposure to commercial influences. The evolution of southern music began the first time American colonists added provincial ingredients of American society to a British folk song. First through racial and ethnic interaction, and later through the creation of Protestant hymnals, the transformation of southern music occurred in a series of stages, constantly evolving and adapting itself to contemporary conditions. In the postbellum period, southern music absorbed the influence of popular ballads and the repertoires of travelling professional and semi-professional entertainers. The publication of John A. Lomax's Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads in 1910 on the heels of the national fascination with the frontier and its perceived heroic inhabitants provided yet another component to the evolving southern musical matrix. By 1920, southern music exhibited the encroachment of American popular culture, yet it remained peculiarly and distinctly southern. In the mid-twenties, the relatively new recording industry recognized the economic potential of southern music and set about marketing it to an

⁸ Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers, 38; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 25-27.

isolated audience. In the process of commercializing the music of rural white southerners, these companies ushered in the next stage of southern music's transformation, one characterized by the exportation of local styles to regional markets.⁹

The inauspicious birth of commercially recorded rural white southern music (hereafter referred to as "country music") took place on July 1, 1922 in New York City. Fresh on the heels of playing for a Civil War veterans' reunion in Virginia, Arkansas-born A.C. "Eck" Robertson and Oklahoma-born Henry Gilliland appeared at the offices of Victor Records. Uninvited and unannounced, the two must have received a cool reception, but the company's directors permitted the recording of a few tunes and Victor subsequently released Robertson's solo fiddle version of "Sallie Gooden." While Robertson's disc enjoyed some success, country music found its first commercially viable performer in Fiddlin' John Carson. A champion fiddler born in the hill country of northern Georgia, Carson gained his musical reputation from performances in political campaigns, various social gatherings, and especially at the Old Time Fiddlers' Association Convention in Atlanta, where he won the championship at least seven times between 1913 and 1922. In the mid-1920s, Ralph Peer (a representative of the General Phonograph Corporation) traveled to Georgia to record Carson. Okeh Records tentatively shipped five hundred copies of two selections from the Carson session to the Atlanta area. When the initial pressings sold out within a month or so, Okeh signed Carson to an exclusive

⁹ Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers, 73-74; Malone, "Music," 988.

recording contact, and so began the commercialization of rural white southern music.¹⁰

Recording companies' interest in the music of rural whites actually began in 1919, two years after the publication of Cecil Sharp's Folksongs From the Southern Appalachians. Previously confined to the music of native Americans and rural blacks, Americans' vision of folk music soon expanded to the realms of white folk music via cowboy songs and Appalachian ballads. Record companies initially marketed the recordings of these folk idioms primarily to urban audiences, often using performers of urban origin. The music that covered the southern countryside struck the American public as much less romantic and the record companies as much less profitable. The Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 heightened Americans' disdain for all things southern and helped to confine the promotion of early country music to a rural, white southern audience. While the companies attempted to soften the inelegant roots of country music with labels like "Olde Time Fiddlin' Tune" and "Familiar Tunes on Fiddle, Banjo, Harmonica, and Accordion," they could not veil the music's unadorned rusticity. In 1925, Ralph Peer labeled a band he was recording "Hill Billies," and by late 1926 the term "hillbilly music" appeared in Variety as a label for what most

¹⁰ Bill C. Malone, The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1981) 1; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 35-36; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al., Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987) 259; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 37-38.

Americans viewed more as “southern” than “folk” music.¹¹

Initially viewed as status symbols at the turn of the century, records gradually became more affordable in the 1920s, largely due to plummeting sales brought about by the emerging popularity of radio. The increased availability of records brought about two important developments in country music: the expansion of its audience (within its original demographic market) and the initial intermingling of sub-regional styles. While the extent of the former development is difficult to gauge, the fact that the country music industry survived both the initial misgivings of the record companies and the crippling effects of the Great Depression offers a convincing argument to audience enlargement. Merle Travis’ parents did not have a great deal of disposable income, yet he recalls his father ordering a record from the Sears and Roebuck catalog if enough money was left over after the purchase of necessities. The establishment of Decca Records in 1934 had a great deal to do with this phenomenon. Founder Jack Kapp’s introduction of a lower-priced record line nudged other companies to do the same, with most reductions coming in their folk catalogs. With record prices falling, as Chet Atkins recalls, “suddenly there was more music

¹¹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 27; Norm Cohen, liner notes, *Minstrels and Tunesmiths: The Commercial Roots of Early Country Music*, John Edwards Memorial Foundation LP 109, 1981; Wilgus, “Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly,” 142; Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 194-195; Archie Green, “Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol,” *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 78, No. 309 (July-September 1965): 213, 221.

for everybody.”¹²

While enlarging the country music audience, the availability of records also provided a conduit for the commixture of various performing styles. The complex roots of the genre insured that from the beginning it would bear the imprints of American popular music and the ethnic and racial conglomeration of the southern states. Nevertheless, distinct sub-regional styles of white southern music developed even in the absence of cultural isolation. Together with the vigorous presence of radio, records provided the opportunity for performers to absorb the intricacies of other musicians and vocalists. Ever so slowly, country moved closed to an identifiable hybrid of folk, pop and peculiarly southern music. To many northern listeners, it may very well have all sounded the same from the start, but the process of sculpting country music into its modern form took nearly thirty years. By no means complete by 1939, the molding process was certainly underway, with records playing an ever-increasing role in the process.

No singular artist played a more prominent role in stylistic diffusion than Jimmie Rodgers. Appropriately termed “the Father of Country Music,” Rodgers had a profound influence on performers of the 1930s and 1940s and spawned a flock of

¹² Richard Spottswood, “Country Music and the Phonograph,” Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 21, No. 8 (February 1987): 18; Wolfe, Tennessee Strings, vii; Malone, Country Music U.S.A., 81; Ralph Peer, “Rodgers’ Heritage: Influence Inspires Industry of Today,” The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (21 May 1954): 17; Mark Humphrey, “Interview: Merle Travis,” Old Time Music No. 36 (Summer 1981): 8; Ronnie F. Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 54-55; Chet Atkins with Bill Neely, Country Gentleman (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1974) 56.

imitators and disciples. In every aspect from his manner of dress to his singing and performing style, Jimmie Rodgers made an impression on his audience that directly influenced country music's development for nearly twenty years. Writing in 1953, Ralph Peer reflected on Rodgers' importance:

The impetus which he gave to so-called hillbilly music...set in motion the factors which resulted in making this sector of the amusement business into a matter of world-wide importance and a source for a high percentage of our popular hits.

Initially recorded by Peer in 1927, Rodgers became the most popular country music entertainer of the Depression. At the time of his death in 1933, he was selling two to three times more records than any other contemporary country music performer.

Nolan Porterfield, Jimmie Rodgers' biographer, notes that even at the height of the Depression people often spent a day's pay for a Jimmie Rodgers record. With a combination of personal magnetism and sexual appeal, Jimmie Rodgers attracted both urban and rural listeners, but, according to Hank Snow and Ernest Tubb, it was his sincere manner of singing that drew the attention of southern youths:

"Jimmie set a pattern in singing folk songs to sing the way the song feels...This free way of singing made an impression on all of us that followed."¹³

¹³ Ralph Peer, "Discovery of the First Hillbilly Great," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 20 (16 May 1953): 35; Nolan Porterfield, Jimmie Rodgers: The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979) 107, 249-50, 313-314; Hank Snow and Ernest Tubb, "Rodgers' Influence on Country Music," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 20 (16 May 1953): 20-35.

Jimmie Rodgers' legacy lay not only in his vocal style, but in his musical repertoire as well. From blues to pop to jazz, Rodgers' penchant for singing and playing a variety of musical styles opened the eyes and ears of many of his listeners to country music's potential. His most enduring selections of lyrical material, however, remained firmly rooted in the southern soil. From blues songs to hobo laments to rambler struts, Rodgers' repertoire provided the lyrical foundation for a genre drifting away from its instrumentally-inclined base. His popularity insured that a country music performers' commercial success would forever be linked to his/her ability to reach listeners with lyrics that touched upon their lives.

Jimmie Rodgers' pushing of the musical boundaries of country music coupled with his lyrical legacy set the stage for the 1930s as a transitional period for the genre. Younger performers influenced by Rodgers began to supplant older performers on radio and records. Unlike their predecessors, they did not find contentment as part-time performers, for Rodgers' success proved that singers and musicians could make a living (perhaps even a lucrative one) as a successful country music performer. While they grew up in an atmosphere of conservative folk music, they recognized the commercial viability of incorporating less austere musical idioms as blues and ragtime into the country music repertoire. Many grew up listening to radio and records. As historian Robert Coltman points out, "they were already at one remove from the source... They had an idea that they might be able to learn new licks and tricks from pop crooners, blues singers, orchestras, Latin dancers, ragtimers, jazzers." They borrowed ideas from one another as well as from other musical genres, and more

importantly, they wrote many of their own songs. Their lyrics reflected their rural, southern upbringings, but they became more experimental in their instrumental backup, augmenting the traditional string band sound with mandolin, stand-up bass, and acoustic steel guitar. Their vocals became smoother and softer, often employing harmony to create an atmosphere in marked contrast to the musical rusticity of earlier performers. These younger performers embraced the benefits associated with commercialization and clearly subscribed to the notion that country music needed to advance beyond its folkish roots in order to expand its audience base.¹⁴

The term “commercialization” tends to imply a pollution of something pure, but it is doubtful that the younger performers of the thirties viewed their actions as contaminative to country music’s authenticity. Country music in the 1930s could not remain static with radio and records encouraging the cross-fertilization of American musical styles. In enhancing the commercial viability of country music, younger performers served as vanguards for the modernization of country music that took place in the 1940s. Judging from their success, the country music audience did not view them as inauthentic country artists. Some performers stuck close to country music’s folk roots, while others disregarded all parameters in their experimentations. Listeners picked and chose their favorites as country music sauntered away from its folk isolation. Bill Ivey points out that the process began as early as the mid-twenties: “From the moment it appeared on radio and on commercial recordings...country

¹⁴ Malone, “Country Music,” 1003; Bob Coltman, “Across the Chasm: How the Depression Changed Country Music,” Old Time Music No. 23 (Winter 1976-1977): 6, 7, 11.

music began to gain sophistication and to lose some of the rough-hewn purity that characterized the white southern folk tradition.” By 1940, country music continued to reflect its southern origins while its audience remained primarily rural and southern in composition. Together with records, radio laid the groundwork for country music’s breakthrough in the World War II era.¹⁵

To appreciate radio’s part as an agency for country music expansion and change, one needs to understand the importance of the medium in the 1930s. The relatively young radio industry underwent considerable expansion in the thirties, mainly due to its ability to provide inexpensive entertainment in the midst of Depression. In 1930, forty percent of American homes reported having one or more radios; by 1940, the figure doubled to eighty-one percent. Even in the poverty-stricken South, sixty percent of whites owned a radio in 1940. In the days before television, radio provided an important source of entertainment for southerners whose economic status precluded more expensive avenues of leisure. As Chet Atkins explains, “most of the small towns in the South depended upon the radio as their contact with the outside world.” In the early mornings and then again at noon, southerners could tune in to hear performers on regional stations. In the days before radio stations proliferated the airwaves, a listener in North Carolina could hear a small 1,000-watt station one or two states away in addition to local programming. High-wattage stations like WSM, WLS, and others enjoyed “clear-channel” status, enabling listeners from around the country to tune into them on the uncluttered dial. At night,

¹⁵ Bill Ivey, foreward, Country Gentleman, xi.

the infamous outlaw X-stations blaring from Mexico with ungodly wattage transmitted country music between near-ubiquitous commercials. And, of course, on the weekends, a selection of radio barn dances blanketed the South.¹⁶

Inspired by the communal rural gatherings of previous centuries, the radio barn dance offered listeners a variety program of comedy and down-home music. The first American radio station (KDKA) went on the air in Pittsburgh (1920) and within a couple of years radio stations began to appear in the South. In the absence of network programming (NBC and CBS were not formed until 1926 and 1927, respectively), stations turned to local talent for music and talk shows. Fiddlin' John Carson's appearance on Atlanta's 500 watt WSB in the fall of 1922 serves as a signpost for the beginning of country music programming in the South. WBAP (Fort Worth) initiated the barn dance format on the night of January 4, 1923, with its broadcast of an hour and a half of square dance music, but the era of the weekly barn dance began on April 19, 1924, when the WLS Barn Dance in Chicago went on the air.¹⁷

¹⁶ Timothy A. Patterson, "Hillbilly Music Among the Flatlanders: Early Midwestern Radio Barn Dances," Journal of Country Music Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 1975) : 12; Wayne W. Daniel, Pickin' on Peachtree: A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990) 173; Atkins, Country Gentleman, 74; Rich Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 1946-1964 (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 12.

¹⁷ Bill C. Malone, Southern Music, American Music (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979) 58; John Lomax III, Nashville: Music City USA (New York: Abrams, 1985) 83; Alan Havig, "Radio and American Life," Reviews in American History Vol. 8, No. 3 (September 1980): 404; Green, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol," 209, 219; United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Housing General Characteristics. (Washington: U. S. Printing Press, 1943) Table 10. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 33; "WLS National Barn Dance 30th Anniversary on 24th," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 15 (10 April 1954): 5.

Initially skeptical of the profitability of a program centered around nostalgic country dances, heart songs, and novelty numbers, WLS' owners (Sears, Roebuck and Company) soon discovered its potential when telegrams and letters began pouring into the station after the Barn Dance's first broadcasts. Gradually, as the station's wattage increased (from 500 to 5,000 watts in 1925), so too did its roster of Barn Dance performers. The station's hiring of Bradley Kincaid in 1926 symbolized its effort to insure that the show would remain more rural than southern in content. Kincaid brought to WLS and its audience the English/mountain folk songs and hymns his mother sang to him as a child growing up in Kentucky. When the Prairie Farmer purchased the station in 1928, the new owners continued the policy of emphasizing folk talent that would not alienate northern listeners. As D. K. Wilgus points out, "early WLS artists performed in styles lacking some of the sharp, regional characteristics of the South." Glenn Snyder, with WLS as manager after 1932, termed rural southern music "hungry hillbilly," and kept smoother-sounding groups like the Prairie Ramblers on the program to offset the presence of a band of southern singers and musicians called the Cumberland Ridge Runners. George Biggar, one of Barn Dance's early program directors, commented on his dislike of the term "hillbilly": "We use the terms 'folk music' for traditional music, and 'modern folk music' for more recently-written songs." In 1954, WLS performers Homer and Jethro used the phrase "uptown hillbilly" to describe the music heard on the National Barn Dance since its inception. Another country music show out the Midwest, the WHO Iowa Barn Dance Frolic, similarly emphasized a variety of singing styles more rural than

southern in approach. Despite their initial trepidations, the midwestern barn dances introduced northern listeners to "country" music and paved the way for the genre's audience expansion of the 1940s.¹⁸

By 1935, some 5,000 radio programs across the nation featured some type of country music. With network programming in its infancy, most stations still relied on local shows to fill airtime. This was especially true in the South and Southwest because only forty-five of the regions' 137 radio stations maintained an affiliation with the networks. Most broadcast under 20,000 watts because the absence of airwave competition increased their coverage area. Some, like 5,000-watt WWVA, in Wheeling, West Virginia reached audiences in the Northeast as well. In April 1933, the station began broadcasting the World's Original WWVA Jamboree, and some of the show's stars (i.e., Doc Williams) soon gained a following in the northern states. Two personalities on two Knoxville stations, Cas Walker (WROL) and Lowell Blanchard (WNOX) dominated eastern Tennessee radio in the 1930s and 1940s. Walker emphasized local talent and early morning live shows. The WNOX station manager hired Blanchard in 1936 with specific instructions to acquire hillbilly

¹⁸ George Biggar, "'The WLS National Barn Dance Story: The Early Years,'" John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 7, No. 23 (Autumn 1971): 106; Wayne W. Daniel, "WLS National Barn Dance: Uptown Downhome Music in the Old Hayloft," Old Time Country Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 14-16; Loyal Jones, "Who is Bradley Kincaid?," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 12, No. 43 (Autumn 1976): 122, 126-127; D. K. Wilgus, "Current Hillbilly Recordings: A Review Article," Journal of American Folklore Vol. 78, No. 309 (July-September 1965): 274; WLS Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville, Tennessee; George Biggar quoted in Renfro Cole Norris, "The Ballad on the Air," MA thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1951, 110; Patterson, "Hillbilly Music Among the Flatlanders," 14-16.

performers. The WNOX Mid-Day-Merry-Go-Round (officially named in 1936) supplemented country music with Dixieland, swing, and a heavy dose of comedy to create a true “variety” program. Blanchard also introduced a Saturday night program, eventually named the Tennessee Barn Dance in 1942 that introduced its Appalachian listeners to several polished vocalists and musicians as well as traditional mountain music. Other early barn dances included the Old-Fashioned Barn Dance (KMOX, Saint Louis, begun around 1930), the Crazy Barn Dance (WBT, Charlotte, 1934), the Boone County Jamboree (WLW, Cincinnati, 1936), the Old Dominion Barn Dance (WRVA, Richmond, 1938), the KWKH Round-Up (Shreveport, 1939), and the WSB Barn Dance (Atlanta, 1940). Many of these stations increased to 50,000 watts in the late 1930s and early 1940s; the overall effect was an enlargement of the country music audience and a breakdown in the isolation of regional musical tastes. Primarily through the barn dance programs, radio became the chief exponent of southern music to the nation in the 1930s. As Roy Acuff explains, “There’s no question, it helped to popularize country music. It carried ‘hillbilly’ music far beyond the hills and into the living rooms of people everywhere, and turned it into ‘country’ music.” Reciprocally, radio exposed white southern musicians to other regional and nationally popular styles that profoundly influenced country music’s creative development. One country music show, however, demonstrated considerable more interest in exporting southeastern musical stylings than it did in incorporating other regional singularities

into its program.¹⁹

The Grand Ole Opry made its debut as the WSM Barn Dance on November 28, 1925 and within a month became a regularly scheduled Saturday evening program. The Opry was essentially the creation of "Judge" George Hay, a radio announcer whose career began in Memphis and continued in Chicago (where he became a popular announcer) before his arrival in Nashville in late 1925. Armed with an influx of telegrams supporting the first Barn Dance broadcasts, Hay convinced the station's owners (Nashville's National Life and Accident Insurance Company) of the potential of a variety program that appealed to rural listeners. Like the Midwest barn dances, the first WSM country shows revolved around an eclectic mixture of nostalgic, popular, and rural music, but by 1928 the program (by then called the Grand Ole Opry) revolved around instrumental string bands. While Hay discouraged the development of "stars," two solo performers, an African American harmonica player

¹⁹ Charles K. Wolfe, Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982) 46; Charles K. Wolfe, "The Triumph of the Hills: Country Radio, 1920-1950," Country: The Music and the Musicians, eds. Paul Kingbury and Alan Axelrod (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) 70-77; Ivan M. Tribe, Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984) 43, 53; Barbara Kempf "Meet Doc Williams: Country Music Star, Country Music Legend," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 10, No. 33 (Spring 1974): 2, 6; Charles K. Wolfe, Carl Smith: Satisfaction Guaranteed (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 4; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard, Vol. 59, No. 32 (9 August 1947): 116; Bill C. Malone, "Country Music in the Depression Southwest," The Depression in the Southwest, ed. Donald W. Whisenhunt (Port Washington: Kennikat Press Co., 1989) 61; George Carney, "Country Music and the Radio: A Historical Geographic Assessment," Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal Vol. 11, No. 2 (April 1974): 18, 28; Roy Acuff, Roy Acuff's Nashville, 43.

named De Ford Bailey and an irrepressible older banjoist known as “Uncle Dave” Macon, emerged as popular featured acts by the time the station’s wattage increased to 50,000 in 1932.²⁰

In 1925, Hay seemed content to promote the Opry as a show featuring “folk” music with amateur performers. Gradually, however, Hay became more interested in popularizing the show as a barn dance featuring authentic southern rural musicians. While some of the Opry’s early performers came from urban and even professional backgrounds, Hay insisted on their cultivating a rustic, bucolic image. Hence, a group like Dr. Bate and His Augmented Orchestra became The Possum Hunters and began dressing in hillbilly attire. The Opry’s evolution into a stage show with a live audience had a great deal to do with this development. David Cobb, who came to WSM as an announcer in the early 1930s, commented that “mostly lower-middle class people (of) mostly rural background” comprised the bulk of the show’s live audience. Musicians and singers popular in other parts of the country often experienced a cool reception from the Opry crowd. National Barn Dance superstar Bradley Kincaid found his career in Nashville short-lived: “I never did feel at home on the Grand Ole Opry like I did at WLS. I’d say that I was just fairly popular on the Grand Ole Opry—

²⁰ Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 70-71; Wolfe, Tennessee Strings, 54-58; Richard A. Peterson and Paul DiMaggio, “The Early Opry: Its Hillbilly Image in Fact and Fancy,” Journal of Country Music Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1973): 40; Robert K. Oermann, “The Grand Ole Opry,” Frets Magazine Vol. 4, No. 12 (December 1982): 22-25; Jack Harris, “The True Story of the Famous WSM Grand Ole Opry,” Rural Radio Vol. 1, No. 10 (November 1938), 5.

not like I was on WLS.” Grandpa Jones (who toured with Kincaid on a successful tour of the Northeast) offers this explanation as to why:

The audience in Nashville was different from audiences in New England.

Bradley was doing songs...that you’ve really got to listen to because they are slow and tell a story. The Opry audiences were into a lot of noise and hand-slapping and more of the band sound was taking over.²¹

Hay’s famous line of advice to Opry performers (“Keep it down to earth, boys”) symbolized his awareness of audience tastes as well as his own musical preferences. More than anything else, Hay fought the intrusion of electric instruments into Opry broadcasts. Sam McGee, one of the Opry’s more recognized guitarists, discovered that the policy applied to everyone, regardless of popularity:

I got by with (playing an electric guitar on the Opry) about two Saturday nights; about the third one, (Judge Hay) come in and patted me on the shoulder: ‘Now you wouldn’t play that on the Grand Ole Opry. You know we’re going to hold it down to earth.’ And I said, ‘Well, thank you, Judge, I won’t bring it back any more.

As WSM increased in wattage and the Grand Ole Opry gained in stature, however, Hay found his control of the show circumvented by Harry Stone, who replaced Hay as

²¹ Charles K. Wolfe, The Grand Ole Opry: The Early Years, 1925-35 (London: Old Time Music, 1975) 17-18; Peterson and DiMaggio, “Early Opry,” 43; David Cobb, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 18 August 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Bradley Kincaid quoted in Jones, “Who is Bradley Kincaid?” 131; Grandpa Jones, Everybody’s Grandpa: Fifty Years Behind the Mike (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 105.

station manager of the Opry in 1930. Historian Charles Wolfe describes Stone's demeanor and the vision he brought to WSM: "(He) was cool, efficient, businesslike, and thoroughly professional. He saw that the show would have to attract full time, professional acts, and he set about trying to make it possible for WSM to support full-time musicians." To this end, Stone formed the WSM Artists' Service Bureau in 1934 to systematically promote the personal appearances of Opry acts. Additionally, he hired non-traditional (and non-southern) act like the Vagabonds to soften Hay's hard-edged approach. Stone could point to the fact that only fifteen percent of the 60,000 weekly letters to the station came from Tennessee listeners, with at least twenty percent originating from non-southern states like Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania. At least in part due to Stone's actions, the Grand Ole Opry's popularity increased dramatically as the 1930s progressed. The show's institutional status was confirmed on October 14, 1939, when NBC broadcast a thirty-minute segment of the show sponsored by R.J. Reynolds' Prince Albert Tobacco on its national Red network. By July 1940, thirty-five NBC stations were carrying the thirty minute portion of the six-hour local broadcast coast to coast. Within a span of fifteen years, the Grand Ole Opry had made the transition from an informal local program centered around amateur musicians to a nationally broadcast show featuring professional performers playing in a variety of musical styles.²²

²² Sam McGee quoted in Bob Krueger, "Sam McGee, He Was a Country Guitar Legend," Guitar Player Vol. 10, No. 6 (June 1976), 38; Wolfe, Tennessee Strings, 64, 66; Charles K. Wolfe, The Grand Ole Opry: The Early Years, 117; Harris. "True Story of the Famous WSM Grand Ole Opry, 5; Mel Foree, "Down the Smoky Mountain Trail," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 1, No. 3 (November 1939):

While George Hay fought the onslaughts of the star-system and sophistication, John Lair was concocting his own vision of a program revolving around folk talent. As a youth growing up in Kentucky's Renfro Valley, Lair developed a deep appreciation of American folk music and Appalachian culture, an affection that he brought in spirit and body (in the form of the Cumberland Ridge Runners) to WLS in the early 1930s. The polish of the National Barn Dance format, however, proved incongruous with Lair's idea of an authentic rural program, and he eventually moved to Cincinnati's WLW, bringing many of the Ridge Runners with him. Not content to simply simulate a barn dance, Lair came up with the idea of broadcasting an actual one from a rural site. Not surprisingly, he chose Renfro Valley as the locale and together with three members of the Ridge Runners purchased a tract of land in the area. The first Renfro Valley Barn Dance was broadcast from Cincinnati in October, 1937, but on November 4, 1939 the show debuted on Louisville's WHAS from a rural site near Mount Vernon, Kentucky. The show went on to enjoy considerable success both as a radio program and as a tourist attraction. By 1941, plans were under way to construct a hotel on the site to accommodate the average Saturday night crowd of 5,000 people who could not be housed in the settlement's lodge and tourist cabins. As the barn could only house 1,000 at a time, Lair scheduled several shows on Saturday afternoons and evenings. Eventually picked up by network radio, the show became an unqualified success. Like Hay, Lair enforced a strict (yet unconventional) dress code

4; Myron Tassin and Jerry Henderson, Fifty Years at the Grand Ole Opry (Gretna: Pelican Pub. Co., 1975) 75.

for the show's performers. Homer Haynes and Jethro Burns recall that Lair kept a close eye on everything from a performer's hair-cut to his costuming. Lair also came up with several characters for the show, including Old Joe Clark and the Coon Creek Girls.²³

As pioneers of the barn dance format, John Lair, George Hay, George Biggar and others demonstrated the potential of rural-based programming in the Depression. Unlike country music recordings (distributed primarily in the South), the radio barn dance freely disseminated the music of the rural, white South to a national audience. The discovery of a non-southern audience inevitably led to effort to broaden country music's scope beyond its rough-hewn embryo. The WLS National Barn Dance was particularly instrumental in this development via its promotion of vocalists and women. As the paramount communications medium of the 1930s, radio effectively challenged the southern rubric that confined the public performance of country music to instrumental-based, male-dominated groups.

The radio barn dances offered women the opportunity to reassert their role as carriers of distinct southern musical traditions as well as furnishing them with a source

²³ Wolfe, Kentucky Country, 52, 76; Wayne W. Daniel, "Renfro Valley, Kentucky: The Valley Where Time Stands Still," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 22, No. 7 (January 1988): 56; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 184; "A Hillbilly Colony Built Up Around 1,000-Seat Barn Run By John Lair," The Billboard Vol. 142, No. 12 (28 May 1941): 31; Nat Green, "Fantastic Grosses With Folkshows," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book (New York: Billboard Publishing Co., Inc., 1944) 344-345; Henry "Homer" Haynes and Kenneth "Jethro" Burns, "From Moonshine to Martinis, Part Two" Journal of Country Music Vol. 16, No. 1 (1994): 4; Old Joe Clark, interview with John W. Rumble, Berea, 3 December 1985, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville, Tennessee.

of supplemental income or even possibly a career. Prior to the commercialization of rural white southern music, women provided the main conduit for the preservation of English ballads via their informal (and often accapella) singing in domestic settings. While men provided the music for secular public gatherings, women exercised their influence on songs heard around the house and in church. With the popularity of parlor pianos and sheet music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women also exposed their children to sentimental Victorian ballads and the offerings of Tin Pan Alley songwriters. In addition to transmitting songs and singing styles to future generations, women also played a variety of instruments in homes, from banjos to guitar, and in some cases, even the fiddle. In dominating the musical environment of the domestic sphere, southern women played a major role in shaping the development of the region's distinct musical characteristics.²⁴

As an outgrowth of public performances, early commercial southern music largely reflected the southern string-band and frolic traditions. While the domestic tradition was never completely eclipsed in the 1920s and early 1930, record companies' penchant for fiddle-based music and bluesy vocals, coupled with southern social norms, ensured the male domination of early country music. Robert Coltman

²⁴ Robert K. Oermann, "Honky-Tonk Angels: Kitty Wells to Patsy Cline," Country: The Music and the Musicians, 320; Robert Coltman, "'Sweethearts of the Hills': Women in Early Country Music." John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 14, No. 52 (Winter 1978): 162; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 22; Norm and Anne Cohen, "Folk and Hillbilly Music: Further Thoughts on Their Relation," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 13, No. 46 (Summer 1977): 50-57; Mary A. Bufwack, Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993) 102-104.

estimates that only three percent of individual artists and groups in country music recorded between 1922 and 1931 were women soloists or all-women groups. In general, few string-bands admitted women as musicians, leading some (like Samantha Bumgarner and Eva Davis in 1924) to form their own makeshift bands. More often, they played back-up roles as vocalists or accompanists in family bands or in religious-based groups. It was not until Ralph Peer recorded the Carter Family in August of 1927 that record companies began to recognize women's role in the country music equation.²⁵

One can attribute the Carter Family's success to several factors, with their undeniable musical talents and lyrical repertoire topping the list. The harmonic blending of Maybelle Carter's alto and Sara Carter's soprano created one of country music's finest vocal pairings, while Maybelle's distinct rhythm guitar style inspired thousands of young southern guitarists. Lyrically, their songs centered around religious and domestic themes, emphasizing sentimental and fundamentalist imagery in a marriage of church and parlor traditions. As Bill Malone points out, "The Carter Family sang of an America that was gradually disappearing, an American whose values had seemed inextricably interrelated with rural or small-town life." While their records sold more steadily than spectacularly, the Carter Family's success demonstrated the commercial viability of the domestic country tradition. More

²⁵ Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 22; Coltman, "Sweethearts of the Hills," 161-162, Oermann, "Honky-Tonk Angels," 321; Robert K. Oermann, "Mother, Sister, Sweetheart, Pal: Women in Old-Time Country Music," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 125.

importantly, it invalidated the precept that associated female performers with immorality. Shielded by the male presence of A.P. Carter (as chaperon and occasional vocalist), Sara and Maybelle Carter exuded virtuousness in their presentations of songs about home and God. Until their retirement (from records in 1941 and radio in 1943), they remained one of early country music's most durable and successful acts, setting an important precedent for other performers of the Depression era.²⁶

While other female performers (i.e., Patsy Montana, Louise Massey) enjoyed commercial success via record sales, the vast majority of women able to make a career in country music did so through radio. Mary Bufwack points out, however, that even on radio they remained an unmistakable minority, representing only about ten to fifteen percent of barn dance acts during the Depression. The WLS National Barn Dance featured female performers more prominently than their southern counterparts with several gaining national popularity. Myrtle Eleanor Cooper (a.k.a. Lulu Belle) arrived at WLS in 1932 as a comedienne and singer; by the mid-thirties she had emerged as one of country music's most popular female performers as well as one of the nation's top radio personalities. Dolly and Millie Good (a.k.a. The Girls of the Golden West) joined the National Barn Dance in 1933; by 1935, their appealing western repertoire garnered them a spot as regulars on Rudy Vallee's national radio show broadcast from New York City. Eventually, they landed in Cincinnati on

²⁶ Ruth A. Banes, "Dixie's Daughters: The Country Music Female," You Wrote My Life: Lyrical Themes in Country Music, eds. Melton A. McLaurin and Richard A. Peterson (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1992) 90-91; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 65-67; Coltman, "Sweethearts of the Hills," 164-165.

WLW's Midwestern Hayride, where they remained a popular staple into the 1950s. In their employment of western imagery, the Girls of the Golden West broke free from the shackles of the domestic lyrical tradition. WLS promoted other female performers as farm girls, with the DeZurick sisters representing one of the most successful acts in this vein.²⁷

In the South, women found more radio opportunities as comedienues. Minnie Pearl (né Sarah Ophelia Colley) developed a country girl persona that the Grand Ole Opry audience fell in love with soon after her arrival at WSM in 1940. The daughter of an affluent Tennessee saw mill owner, Colley started her career as an actress, but soon found the opportunity that "Minnie Pearl" presented more lucrative. Cousin Emmy (Cynthia May Carver) learned to play a variety of instruments growing up in Kentucky. After becoming the first woman to win the National Old-Time Fiddlers' Contest at Louisville in 1935, she joined WWVA in Wheeling and over the course of the next fifteen years became a very successful regional performer. In commenting on her attributes and her legacy, Mary Bufwack notes that "she relied on her native wit and intelligence to survive as country music's first independent, unmarried, self-supporting female touring attraction." Through their caricatures of Minnie Pearl and Cousin Emmy, Colley and Carver broke into the southern barn dance fraternity to emerge as independent stars in their own right.²⁸

²⁷ Banes, "Dixie's Daughters," 90-91; Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 96-98, 100; Malone, The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music, 29; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 118-119; Coltman, "Sweethearts of the Hills," 169.

²⁸ Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 100-102.

Another barrier for female country music performers fell with the formation of the first all-female string band (the Coon Creek Girls) in 1937. Lily May Ledford, the group's founding member, journeyed from her native Kentucky to the WLS National Barn Dance in 1936. A year later, she took part in the exodus of WLS talent to Cincinnati led by John Lair. True to form, Lair encouraged Ledford and the Coon Creek Girls to maintain a hillfolk appearance. As a staple on the Renfro Valley Barn Dance, the Coon Creek Girls excelled as a first-rate string band capable of holding their own amongst their male counterparts.²⁹

By the end of the 1930s, women had established their presence in the country music field mainly through the inroads they made into the radio barn dances. The Carter Family and Patsy Montana certainly set precedents in the country music recording industry, but female performers in general remained second-class citizens in the eyes of the record companies. The radio barn dances, on the other hand, recognized the audience appeal of female singers and comedienne, and reserved a place for women on their programs, often as frontliners. More opportunities existed for female performers in the North than in the South, primarily due to the persistence of derogatory images of female performers in the southern states. Despite the limitations imposed by their gender, southern women in the 1930s proclaimed their right to be acknowledged as country music performers and re-established their influence on southern music.

²⁹ Coltman, "Sweethearts of the Hills," 175; Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 102-105.

Male performers paid meager attention to these developments. Their primary concern lay in establishing a name for themselves in the still-uncertain country music business. For the vast majority, this meant obtaining a spot on a local radio station that enabled them to advertise their personal appearances. While some country music performers sold quite a few records, most relied on the income derived from their show dates. Charlie Louvin maintains: "You didn't need a record contract in those days. If you worked on the radio, you could play all the show dates that you wanted." While personal appearance dates may not have been as readily available as Louvin implies, his observation is well-founded. Consider Merle Travis' thoughts on the relative unimportance of phonograph discs in the days before World War II: "What did a record mean? It was something you'd stick inside an old phonograph that you couldn't half hear anyhow. Nobody cared about records." Radio, on the other hand, provided an alternative, inexpensive entertainment source for countless southerners, and with most programming local (especially during the daytime throughout the week) stations naturally turned to native performers to fill airtime. In the South, station owners saw in hillbilly performers an inexpensive source of entertainment that appealed to rural listeners. Generally placed on the air in the early morning hours and around noon (in congruity to rural families' breakfast and dinner times), country music shows (usually fifteen to thirty minutes in length) featured a collage of music, comedy, and advertisement. Almost all performers publicized their personal appearances, others fortunate enough to have sponsors promoted products as well. Some performers offset their nominal compensation for their services by selling songbooks

to faithful listeners. While radio performing did not provide a particularly lucrative living, many southerners preferred it to farm work. Upon discovering their musical talent many, like Eddy Arnold, opted for the alternative lifestyle: "(Once) I got to playing at parties...I guess I was sixteen, seventeen years old. I decided well now, by george, there's got to be something better than looking up a mule's rear end."³⁰

Typical country music radio performers in the late 1930s were white, Protestant males who learned to play music from family members or neighbors living in or near the rural southern communities of their births. They often inherited musical instruments from siblings and other family members, and gained exposure to a variety of songs and singing styles via their mothers' warblings, informal social gatherings, radio and records. Some sought out musical training from African Americans in adjacent communities, others taught themselves to play fiddles, guitars, banjos, and other stringed instruments. Many pursued careers in music rather tentatively, beginning as part-time musicians while fulfilling their obligations on family farms or at a local mills. In Texas, Tom Yarbrow arranged his radio programs around his schedule at an oil company. More notable acts like Johnnie and Jack and the Louvin Brothers began their careers in the late 1930s and early 1940s in much the same way,

³⁰ Wolfe, "Triumph of the Hills," 83, Charlie Louvin quoted in Ed Bumgardner, "Remaining Half of the Louvin Brothers Preserves the Legacy," Winston-Salem Journal 12 July 1987; Merle Travis quoted in Mark Humphrey, "Interview: Merle Travis, Part 2," Old Time Music No. 37 (Autumn 1981): 22; Atkins, Country Gentleman, 74; Ruth Sheldon Knowles, Bob Wills: Hubbin' It (1938; Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1995) 79; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 95; Eddy Arnold quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 223.

with the Louvins heading to their cotton mill jobs in Chattanooga after their morning show and Johnnie and Jack maintaining day jobs at cabinet and hosiery companies in Nashville. Marty Licklider of the Missouri Fox Hunters describes the experience shared by many others who progressively became full-time musicians:

We were on one program a week and were working in a factory for our living.

Gradually, one act after another dropped off the station until ours was the only one left. Then, in May, 1940, we started on the air every day, quit our jobs in the factory, and went into it right.

In Chicago, Kentucky migrants Karl Davis and Harty Taylor worked at "factories and things" until Bradley Kincaid was able to secure them a spot on WLS. Countless other performers remained in limbo, biding their time in bands without the benefit of broadcast. In 1941, Virginian Edwin J. Malechek wrote into The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder describing his situation:

We are still not on the air, but we play dance engagements three nights a week and are doing fairly good...My brothers have good jobs and are making good money and they hate to quit to play on the air again. They are working in a paper factory here. I am also working but I am not happy at the work I am doing. All my life I wanted to play music, and when I work that's all I have been thinking about, music.³¹

³¹ Neil V. Rosenberg, Bluegrass: A History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) 18-19; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 28-29; Tom Yarbrow, letter, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 2, No. 3 (February 1941): 5; Geno, "Charlie and Ira," 13; Trott, "The Johnnie and Jack Story," 4; Marty Licklider, letter, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1941): 7; Karl

Country music performers of the late 1930s and early 1940s usually developed their affection for performing at an early age, often encouraged by their neighbors. As youths, the Louvin brothers honed their craft with performances at community cakewalks and ice cream suppers. Pat and Russell Jackson of the Dixie Playboys cut their musical teeth at local square dances in a farm community south of Nashville. As Pat Jackson recalls, "Most times they'd have a wood-cuttin' or somethin' and everybody'd gather in and help the man get his wood, then they'd have a big dance at night. Clear out one of the rooms and dance all around. You could feel the old houses shakin' up and down."³²

From community performances, country musicians secured radio spots on the basis of their local reputations or via impromptu auditions before an owner of a station. Many remained sectional performers throughout their careers. Acts fortunate enough to secure radio spots faced a rather feverish existence if they chose to become full-time musicians. Many drifted from town to town until an area was "played out." As Charles Wolfe points out, "it took its toll on the lives of countless entertainers who had to live rootless, nomadic lives bouncing from station to station while they tried to keep their families fed, marriages together, and fresh songs coming." An extended stay on a particular station by no means signified stability. As Russell Jackson recalls,

Davis, interview with Douglas B. Green, location unknown, 8 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Edwin J. Malechek, letter, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 2, No. 6 (September 1941): 9.

³² Bumgardner, "Remaining Half of the Louvin Brothers Preserves the Legacy"; Russell and Pat Jackson, interview with the author, Franklin, 21 October 1998.

groups had to rectify daily road show commitments in every direction with their daily obligation to their home base: "It was a rough life...You'd get up and play fifteen minutes in the morning and hit the road and ride all day, and then play a couple of hours and then head back." Country music performers weathered the inconveniences of this arrangement as a necessary evil of their occupation.³³

In many cases, radio acts willingly accepted nominal fees for the opportunity to advertise their personal appearances. These "sustaining programs" offered a great deal of exposure in the days before promoters and record company advertisements in trade magazines. Making a fairly decent living from personal appearances, the Monroe Brothers threw away the first letter they received from a company seeking to record them. When the Monroes finally agreed to a session, they stipulated a limit to its length: "We finally went up to their studio in Charlotte, but we told 'em we didn't have much time, that we had to get back in time to play a school that night." Merle Travis similarly accentuates the expediency of putting radio shows before records:

In those days, records wasn't the thing. Being on the radio was the big thing...If you were on the radio, people (would) write to you, send you chocolate cakes, and all that stuff. Then when you'd go to town, everybody'd come out to see what you looked like and...you'd pick their favorites.

³³ Bill Bolick, "I Always Liked the Type Of Music That I Play: An Autobiography of the Blue Sky Boys," John Edwards Memorial Foundation LP 104, 1977; Steve Sholes, interview with Tandy Rice, Nashville, 8 February 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 95; Charles K. Wolfe, "Cliff Carlisle," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 19, No. 6 (December 1984): 59; Russell and Pat Jackson interview.

Most performers viewed records as just another form of advertisement or a means to enhance their reputations. Personal appearances provided the major part of their income.³⁴

Local schoolhouses provided the most common setting for country music performers' personal appearances in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As Roy Acuff explains, "we played schoolhouses mostly, but there were courthouse appearances and church basements, and any sort of place where there was a stage." Shows lasted around two hours, with a generous offering of music and comedy for the people who usually paid around twenty-five cents for admission. For the use of the facility, school principals and local PTAs generally accepted forty to fifty percent of a show's proceeds. As Pat Jackson points out, "they were lookin' for a way to make a little bit of money for the schoolhouse, so they was glad to have 'em. Most all of them would welcome you." On the other hand, as Bill Bolick (of the Blue Sky Boys) remembers, some schools refused to let country acts play at their institutions: "A lot of the teachers, and especially the principals and the higher ups in the schools, felt that this music wasn't conducive to a good way of life and they were pretty much opposed to it." In any event, once an act secured a venue the time came for promotion of the show. Performers fortunate enough to have radio shows broadcast their upcoming dates, while others depended more on the distribution of printed circulars. A receptive

³⁴ Wolfe, "Cliff Carlisle," 59; Hank Snow, The Hank Snow Story (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 154; Merle Travis, interview with Douglas B. Green, unknown location, 17 October 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 23-24; Peterson, Creating Country Music, 190; Jones, Everybody's Grandpa, 77.

schoolhouse might actually participate in the advertising process, as Pat Jackson explains: "You'd leave (the circulars) with the school and then the kids would carry them home with 'em and put 'em up and that was a pretty good way of getting it out." Chet Atkins recalls hooking up a public address system to a car battery to promote personal appearances to people who did not have radios. Through whatever means necessary, performers found ways to disseminate information about their upcoming shows.³⁵

Personal appearances satisfied rural southerners' hunger for entertainment while providing radio entertainers with much-needed revenue. Russell Jackson recalls: "Most times we had a pretty good crowd. Well, there wasn't else much to do, see, actually. Either sit at home or come and watch us." Quite often, an act remained unsure of a crowd turnout until the time of the show, as Grandpa Jones explains:

I remember one time we had to drive up a dry creek bed—that was the only road—to a little old schoolhouse. We figured there wouldn't be nobody there, but when eight o'clock came, here come lanterns down the mountains. And they filled it up. They knew about us some way.

Arriving at a desolate spot in rural Mississippi with Roy Acuff, Grand Ole Opry announcer David Cobb remembers expressing his doubts to Acuff about the

³⁵ Dale Vinnicur, Jim and Jesse: Bluegrass and More (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1993) 3; Acuff, Roy Acuff's Nashville, 57-58; Erbsen, "Wiley and Zeke," 45; Russell and Pat Jackson interview, Bolick, "I Always Liked the Type Of Music That I Play"; Atkins, Country Gentleman, 95.

prospective turnout. With showtime arriving, Cobb's uncertainties proved unfounded:

"Boy, did they come. Flatbed wagons drawn by tractors with twenty people of all ages sittin' on 'em and cars and wagons of all descriptions."³⁶

The environment at personal appearances undoubtedly made an impact on performing styles. Zeke Morris (of the Morris Brothers) and Hank Snow both recall the need to both play and sing loud in the absence of amplifiers and microphones. Some schoolhouses provided electricity, but as Chet Atkins recalls, "most of the rooms were so small that you didn't really need amplification." At more rudimentary locales with no stage or electricity, performers simply improvised. Jim and Jesse McReynolds, for example, recall attending a Carter Family personal appearance where the featured act played by the light of kerosene lamps in a corner of an old schoolhouse. The "kerosene circuit," as many performers referred to it, provided family entertainment in a communal setting for thousands of rural southerners, many of whom did not possess automobiles or radios. While country music acts might occasionally dress in costumes for their performances, little if anything else distinguished them from their listeners. The participants of the communal gatherings in the rural schoolhouses of the South shared common beliefs and similar backgrounds. At no other time in country music's history would its audience have such an infusive impact on the genre's development. Despite the trend toward commercialization via radio and records, country music on the eve of World War II

³⁶ Russell and Pat Jackson interview; Grandpa Jones quoted in Robert K. Oermann, "Grandpa Jones Cherishes Country Traditions with his Own Old-Time Manner," The Tennessean 5 December 1990; David Cobb interview.

remained a grass-roots, folk phenomenon primarily due to the reciprocal relationship established between the performer and the audience at the personal appearance shows.³⁷

Some of the most convincing evidence of the genre's pre-war folksiness can be found in the prevalence of rural and regional imagery in country music lyrics during the period. The English ballads and Tin Pan Alley songs played throughout the South prior to country music's commercialization tended to focus on the tragic and the sentimental. Certainly, a number of humorous pieces popularized by minstrels remained popular, as did some nonsensical ditties, but for the most part southerners gravitated toward songs with more somber or nostalgic themes. With commercialization and the subsequent need for fresh material, country music writers continued to emphasize these traditional themes. Gradually, more and more songs appeared dealing with male-female relationships, many containing the same humorous or tragic elements present in earlier "folk" songs. Fascination with liberal African American blues themes ignited a white blues phenomenon in the late 1920s and early 1930s, leading to the appearance of several rather risqué country music songs that employed the double-entendre. The domestication of country music that occurred in the mid-1920s as a result of radio expansion and personal appearance tours inevitably encouraged writers to explore more conservative themes as the decade progressed. In

³⁷ Erbsen, "Wiley and Zeke," 45; Snow, Hank Snow Story, 127; Atkins, Country Gentleman, 95; Nelson Sears, Jim and Jesse: Appalachia to the Grand Ole Opry (Lancaster: Nelson Sears, 1976) 19.

the midst of Depression, religious and calamitous songs began to soar in popularity, along with others that predicated traditional norms. As Bill Malone points out:

Rural southerners responded affectionately to songs which reaffirmed the values of home, family, mother, and God, and they took to their hearts songs about dying orphans, neglected mothers, blind children, maidens who died of broken hearts, and eastbound trains that carried penniless children to see their poor blind convict fathers.³⁸

In their penchant for graphic imagery, southern songwriters set the precedent for realism in country music lyrics. Art Satherley elucidates on this development:

In (country) music...we concentrate on the emotions. The country people, these so-called hillbillies, are tremendously sensitive people, with deep emotions. Whereas the sophisticated city person likes these humbug, boy-girl love songs, with everything pretty-pretty, the mountaineer is a realist. His songs deal with loneliness, misery, death, murder.³⁹

An examination of country music songs in the late 1930s reveals that southerners found the strength to overcome their adversities and rise above their economic plight in the tenets of their religion and in their communal ethos. The rural church and schoolhouse represent the places where they congregated to tap into these

³⁸ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 14-16; Dorothy Horstman, Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy, 3rd Edition (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1996) 97.

³⁹ Art Satherley quoted in Maurice Zolotow, "Hillbilly Boom: Uncle Art Satherley Seeks Out Country Music in the Bayous, Canbrakes, and Hills," Saturday Evening Post Vol. 216, No. 33 (12 February 1944): 38.

efficacious resources. This helps to explain rural white southerners' gravitation to country music and its performers. Country music lyrics spoke to their hopes, pains, and aspirations, while the music itself provided them with the opportunity to gather as a collective whole in much the same way as they did on Sunday mornings.

Country music also fostered a collective consciousness by providing a source of pride for many southerners. Through country music, they acquired a means to define themselves and their culture. While northern politicians disparaged the South's sluggish economic development, country music performers sang the praises of the region. The grass-roots localism of country music begat several tributes to areas within the South, but many writers also lauded the region in general. Romantic and nostalgic images of childhood homes and the southern landscape appear frequently in country music songs of the thirties, ranging from the subtle to the sublime. Southern songwriters' fascination with trains rose to new heights in this period as well. Alton Delmore describes his attraction to the iron horses: "A train had the most awesome force about it I had ever experienced. It would come chugging down the tracks like a gigantic dragon, belching out smoke and steam and keeping a steady rhythmic roar that was fascinating to a small boy like me." Through country music songs, southerners found sources of pride in their trains, their homes, their religion and their region. In expounding on the virtues of southern culture in the pre-war years, country music songwriters furnished a generation of southerners with the ammunition to defend their lifestyles and their beliefs from the onslaughts of urban and national

prejudice.⁴⁰

The first country music performer to slip into the national consciousness and break through the regional barriers that segregated white southern music was Roy Acuff. Uncompromising and starkly rural in his style and music presentation, Acuff's ascendancy in country music represents the pinnacle of old-time music's popularity on a national scale and the Appalachian sound on a regional basis. Nearly single-handedly, Acuff revived the string-band sound in a period when country music was veering in other directions. Concurrently, he introduced several innovations to the genre that stood in antithesis to progressive country music norms. A maverick force with a recalcitrant approach to the string-band sound, Roy Acuff represents country music's first pre-war progressive.

Prior to Roy Acuff's coronation as the "King of County Music," string-bands remained dominated by instrumentalists, with fiddlers usually taking center stage. An outgrowth of the banjo-fiddle duets that performed at square dances and other social gatherings, a string-band generally revolved around a fiddler's lead part, with the banjoist initially providing the necessary rhythm for dancing. As the guitar grew in popularity after the turn of the century string-bands became three-piece ensembles. The domination of the fiddle continued unabated well into the 1930s, on radio as on records. George Hay termed the fiddle-based groups that dominated the Opry's first decade "hoedown bands," even as fiddle-playing drifted away from the shuffling

⁴⁰ Alton Delmore, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity (Nashville: Country Music Federation Press, 1995) 2.

dance styles. Two fiddlers, in particular, accelerated this trend. Arthur Smith's more melodic-based approach to the instrument smoothed out many of the frontier-characteristics of string-band fiddling, while Clayton McMichen infused pop and jazz elements into traditional-based styles. Commenting on the bands he played with growing up in Georgia, McMichen attributes their popularity to his ability to play the fiddler louder than anyone else did. By the mid-1930s, however, the "louder the better" axiom no longer held sway. People still danced to country music, but with the popularity of radio and barn dances, they increasingly became interested in listening to it as well. The popularity of Jimmie Rodgers (with his bluesy guitar runs and penchant for storytelling) sealed the fate of the hoedown fiddler. Rodgers proved once and for all that you did not need to play danceable rhythms to be a successful country music performer. Rodgers' success also contributed greatly to the ascendance of the guitar in the mid-late 1930s, as it became the primary rhythm instrument for country music acts. Meanwhile, the mandolin and slide guitar began displacing the fiddle as lead instruments in the southeastern acoustic-based bands that dominated the country music scene in the late 1930s.⁴¹

On the heels of the demise of old-time fiddling and banjo-picking came the rise of the vocalists. This too represented a deviation from traditional precepts. Bill

⁴¹ Wolfe, *Tennessee Strings*, 41; Norm Cohen, "The Skillet Lickers: A Study of a Hillbilly String Band and Its Repertoire," *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 78, No. 309 (July-September 1965): 238-239; Rich Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," *The Country Music Book*, ed. Michael Mason (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1985) 139, 177; Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 125; Fred Hoeptner and Bob Pinson, "Clayton McMichen Talking, II," *Old Time Music* No. 2 (Summer 1971): 14; Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," 147.

Malone describes singing in country music's early period as "incidental to instrumentation." He goes on to point out that "much of the vocals of early country music...was merely tangential to the string-band emphasis." Vocal "stars" on country music records like Fiddlin' John Carson, Charlie Poole, Riley Puckett and Jimmie Rodgers represented a distinct minority in an era dominated by musicianship. The radio barn dance format (particularly WLS' National Barn Dance) offered far more opportunities for singers. In general, however, country music lagged behind the popular music trend that placed vocalists in front of bands. On country radio in general, and the Grand Ole Opry in particular, vocalists remained in the background, as Opry stage manager Vito Pellettieri explains:

The string bands were the main thing. What little singing there was, begun with Uncle Dave (Macon), and (the) Delmores and Sam and Kirk (McGee).

But there wasn't a lot of it. We hadn't got to the star business yet, not until the coming of a curly-headed fiddler.

The curly-headed fiddler, or course, was Roy Acuff, who arrived at the Opry in February 1938 and soon thereafter became a regular on the show. Acuff set the precedent as the first featured vocalist backed by a band. In the years that followed, he became a major figure in the popularization of country music and the Grand Ole Opry.⁴²

⁴² Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 50, 54; Hazel Meyer, The Gold in Tin Pan Alley (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958) 74; Vito Pellettieri quoted in Elizabeth Schlappi, Roy Acuff, the Smoky Mountain Boy (Gretna: Pelican Pub. Co., 1978) 34-35; John W. Rumble, liner notes, Roy Acuff: Columbia Historic Edition, Columbia CD 39998,

Born in 1903, Roy Acuff developed an interest in fiddle and gospel music at an early age growing up in East Tennessee. His parents taught him many religious songs at home and he learned several more at the local Missionary Baptist Church. Acuff's father was a civil servant and minister, but he also played fiddle on occasion. While recovering from a sunstroke that ended a potential career as a professional baseball player in 1929, Acuff took the time to learn to play the fiddle by listening to his father's record collection of old time fiddle tunes. After recovering from the illness, he set off on a career as a professional entertainer, joining a medicine show in 1932. By his own account, Acuff acquired his full-throated singing style playing to the large medicine show crowds. After several local performances, Acuff acquired a spot on a local Knoxville radio station and by 1935 he and his band (the Tennessee Crackerjacks) became a regular feature on Lowell Blanchard's noon-time show. In March 1936, the band left for rival Knoxville station WROL, where they acquired a new name (the Crazy Tennesseans) and continued making personal appearances in the area. A CBS talent scout's discovery of the band led to a recording session in October of 1936. In the meantime, Acuff hatched a plan to get his band on the Grand Ole Opry, making several unsuccessful trips to Nashville in the mid-thirties. Acuff knew that the Knoxville area would soon be "played out," and saw a move to clear-channel, 50,000 watt WSM as an alternative to the traditional station to station approach: "The Opry was reaching way on out yonder, and if you could build your

1985; Schlappi, Roy Acuff, 39; Rufus Jarman, "Country Music Goes to Town," Nation's Business Vol. 41, No. 2 (February 1953): 48.

name up on the Opry, you didn't have to change every year." With the support of J.L. Frank (one of country music's first full-time promoters), WSM finally invited Acuff and his band to the Opry as a possible replacement group. Acuff's heartfelt performance of "The Great Speckled Bird" in February 1938 elicited a huge response from the radio audience, which deluged the station with letters voicing their approval of the singer. As David Stone explains, the management at WSM initially harbored misgivings about Acuff's talent: "Come Monday, the powers-that-be of the station wanted to know who was that guy on the radio Saturday night singing about a bird." According to Stone, once the sacks of listener mail started pouring in expressing their approval of Acuff, "they changed their opinions very suddenly." Two weeks later, Acuff became a full-time member of the Opry cast.⁴³

Acuff's arrival at the Grand Ole Opry made a considerable impact on the show as well as on the direction country music would take in the next few years. Acuff views the professionalism that he brought to the Opry as one of his most enduring legacies:

⁴³ Colin Escott, liner notes, The Essential Roy Acuff, Columbia CD CK 48956, 1992; Schlappi, Roy Acuff, 8-9, 17-18, 23, 26-27, 30-32; Acuff, Roy Acuff's Nashville, 18-20-35; Willie J. Smyth, "Early Knoxville Radio (1921-1941): WNOX and 'Midday Merry Go-Round,'" John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 18, Nos. 67-68 (Fall-Winter 1982): 111; some biographical information for Roy Acuff compiled from Roy Acuff Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 190; Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music, 112; Roy Acuff quoted in Jack Hurst, "Phenom of the Opry: Roy Acuff Celebrates 50 Years on Center Stage," Chicago Tribune 14 February 1988; David P. Stone, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 24 May 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Rumble, Roy Acuff: Columbia Historic Edition.

(When I first came to WSM) all the bands that were on the Grand Ole Opry had other jobs, or they worked on a farm... They made their living that way. But when I came here... I had to make a living out of country music. After I got to doin' good, other people saw that money could be made out of country music.

Acuff explored several avenues for increasing his income through his radio appearances. One way as through the sales of songbooks:

I started selling songbooks about forty or forty-one, because everybody was wanting my songs. I put 'em in a little folder like these picture-postcard folders and sold 'em for a quarter... I advertised the first one on Saturday night, and by Wednesday there was 10,000 quarters laying in WSM.

In mid-1943, Billboard estimated Acuff's income of the previous year at around \$200,000. Also in 1942, the Opry's biggest star teamed with veteran song publisher/writer Fred Rose to establish Acuff-Rose Publications, the first American publishing house dedicated solely to country music. Acuff's presence and popularity eroded much of country music's provincial outlook. Suddenly, a lucrative career as a country music performer no longer seemed inconceivable. As Hank Williams once explained: "He's the biggest singer this music ever knew. You booked him and you didn't worry about crowds. For drawing power in the South, it was Roy Acuff, then God." While tremendously popular in the Southeast, Acuff also maintained a substantial following in California, evidenced in the large crowds that turned out at his shows. One show in particular, at Los Angeles' Venice Pier, stood out in Merle

Travis' memory: "So many people tried to get on the pier, the fire department had to stop them, lest a few thousand factory workers and Roy Acuff fall into the Pacific Ocean."⁴⁴

Behind all of Acuff's monetary success, of course, lay Acuff's singing style and distinctive musical sound. Acuff's voice blended the emotionalism of an evangelist with the vociferousness of a medicine show performer. Applied to sentimental, religious, and nostalgic lyrics, it became the ultimate conduit for expressing the trials and tribulations of a generation of Americans besieged by economic Depression and war. As Colin Escott points out, "his voice rang clear and true through the ethers, it was a perfect radio voice, full-throated and wracked with emotion."⁴⁵

If Acuff's appeal was national, his sound was distinctly southern. Acuff's voice, in particular, jugged in marked contrast to his northern radio counterparts. As he explains: "Most of the people back then were crooners. They sang soft, and they sang harmony, where I would just open my mouth and fill my lungs with air, and let it go with force." Musically, the Acuff band sound reflected its Appalachian roots:

⁴⁴ Roy Acuff quoted in Alana Nash, "Home is Where the Gig Is: Life on and off the Road," Country: the Music and the Musicians, 258; Roy Acuff quoted in Hurst, "Phenom of the Opry"; Nat S. Green, "King Korn Klondike: Hillbilly Troupes Roll Up Dizzy Box Office Scores in One-Day and Repeat Stands," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 10 (6 March 1943): 7; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 193; Hank Williams quoted in Colin Escott, Hank Williams: The Biography (Brown: Little, Brown, 1994) 19; Merle Travis, "Recollections of Merle Travis, 1944-1955," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 54 (Summer 1979): 109.

⁴⁵ Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 19.

We...stuck to the style of the old mountain string band, with a fiddle, rhythm guitar, string bass, five-string banjo (played with the old-time frailing technique) and Dobro guitar. Once in a while we used a harmonica or mandolin or even a piano, but the instrument I always favored was the Dobro. Bluegrass historian Robert Cantwell succinctly points out that "Acuff sounded old." Nevertheless, in his emphasis on his own voice and the relatively new Dobro sound, Acuff represented a departure from the old string-band sound.⁴⁶

Essentially an aluminum-resonator equipped Hawaiian guitar, the Dobro rose in popularity among country musicians in the 1930s fascinated by the acoustic volume it provided and the weeping sound that could be obtained by moving a metal bar back and forth between its frets. James Clell Summey played the instrument on Acuff's earliest recordings, but he, along with two other members of the band, left in 1939 over Acuff's refusal to perform more pop-orientated material. Beecher "Pete" Kirby (a.k.a. Bashful Brother Oswald) took Summey's place and remained with Acuff for the next fifty years. Kirby was born in Sevierville, Tennessee in 1911 to a family of musicians, but left for Flint, Michigan at the age of eighteen for a job with the Buick Motor Company. With the advent of the Depression, the job never panned out, and Kirby began performing at local dances and parties for money. He soon became enamored with an Hawaiian guitar sound he heard at one of these gatherings, and

⁴⁶ Roy Acuff quoted in William Price Fox, "Grand Ole Opry," Alabama Heritage Vol. 30, No. 2 (February/March 1979): 96; Acuff, Roy Acuff's Nashville, 63-64; Robert Cantwell, Bluegrass Breakdown: the Making of the Old Southern Sound (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) 79.

began playing, using a knife for a slide. Eventually, he returned to Tennessee where he occasionally filled in for Summey. Once hired by Acuff full-time, he traded in his Hawaiian guitar for a Dobro and his playing style soon became the cornerstone of the Acuff sound.⁴⁷

Kirby wasted no time in helping to make his Dobro work an integral part of the Acuff sound. Less bluesy than his predecessor in his approach to the instrument, Kirby emphasized tremolos more in his playing, often creating a crying sound that accented Acuff's plaintive vocals perfectly. On slow numbers like "Drifting Too Far From Shore" and "The Precious Jewel" the early string band sound (characterized by the banjo and fiddle) is noticeably absent, with Kirby's playing creating a lonesome, woeful atmosphere. On occasion when Acuff tackled more straightforward material (i.e. "Be Honest With Me," 1941), Kirby's Dobro work ensured that the overall sound never drifts too far from its Appalachian source. On uptempo tunes like "Fireball Mail" and "Night Train to Memphis," Kirby demonstrates the rollicking potential of the Dobro sound, again in the absence of the banjo or fiddle. Occasionally, Acuff would insert a "hoedown" tune into the repertoire, with either Kirby or Rachel Veatch plucking the old-style banjo to Acuff's exuberant fiddle-playing. For the most part, however, Acuff opted for the Dobro-orientated approach in the late thirties and early

⁴⁷ Rich Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," 163-164; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 191; John W. Rumble, Roy Acuff (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1983) 11; Bev King, "Bashful Brother Oswald: Dobro Pioneer," Sing Out Vol. 33, No. 1 (Fall 1987): 2-3.

forties. He also began to emphasize religious and lovelorn song material that seemed so perfectly suited to the Acuff-Oswald combination.

In general, most of Acuff's choice of lyrical subject matter remained somewhat serious during the war. Lyrically Acuff represents the prototypical progressive country performer, with around one-quarter of his repertoire in the lost-love category (number 2), with religious songs (number 9) as his second-favorite choice for subject matter. Breaking down the lyrical categories into groups of celebratory/humorous (categories 1, 7, and 10), severed relationships (2, 3, and 4), sentimental/serious (6, 8, and 9), and rounder/work songs (5), one finds that only about seventeen percent of Acuff's lyrical repertoire (and less than twenty percent of other progressive performers analyzed) centered on upbeat material. Contrastingly, about one-third of Acuff's (and about forty percent of progressive performers') selections deal with failed relationships, and nearly one-half (traditional performers, thirty-seven percent) focus on serious subject matter. In general then, Roy Acuff's songs deal more frequently with grievous subject matter than did those of his peers, but he conforms (or, perhaps more accurately, contributes greatly) to the progressives' tendency to sing about lost love.

Acuff's affinity for train imagery accounts for many of the selections designated as category 6 selections, but he also uses trains as a lyrical device in just about every other category as well. In early recordings (i.e. "Streamlined Cannonball," "Just to Ease My Worried Mind"), Acuff employs a whistle to simulate a train sound; in the forties, Oswald's Dobro or Jimmie Riddle's harmonica provided the

rhythmic locomotive effect. While several of Oswald's disciples (namely, Joe Talbot) used the electric steel guitar to emulate the train sound, Acuff and his band for the most part rejected this amplified approach throughout most of the period. Oswald and other country musicians shared Acuff's appreciation for acoustic instrumentation. Some, like Old Joe Clark in Renfro Valley, displayed more outspokenness when commenting on the increased presence of electric instruments as the forties progressed: "That ain't a thing in the world but show-off to a bum bunch of musicians showing another bunch of musicians just how damn loud they can get...It's not music, it's a damn noise." Minnie Pearl and other Grand Ole Opry members lamented what they viewed as the inevitable: "I remember the first time an amplified instrument came on (the Grand Ole Opry), and Roy and all of us just went all to pieces. I remember Roy saying, 'Well, that'll just ruin everything. It'll just ruin everything.'" The winds of change eventually displaced Acuff from his position as the most dominant country music performer of the early 1940s. Even with decreased record sales after the war, however, Acuff continued to draw huge crowds wherever he played. He also remained an important fixture on the Opry well into the 1980s as a country music icon. In the long run, Acuff survived the changes that occurred in country music because he embodied three of the genre's defining characteristics: sincerity, folksiness, and southern virtue.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Beecher "Pete" Kirby, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 28 February 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Old Joe Clark, interview with John W. Rumble, Berea, 5 December 1987, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Minnie Pearl quoted in Pouliot, John Thayer &

Wade Mainer represents another progressive country music performer steeped deep in southeastern cultural and musical roots. Born in Weaverville, North Carolina in 1907, Mainer joined the ranks of the workers at a local sawmill around the time he reached fifteen. He developed his unique, two-finger style of banjo picking while playing at weekend square dances, entertaining the crowd when the regular musicians took a break. In the early 1930s, he teamed with his brother, Joseph Emmett (J.E.), with the two eventually securing a radio show in Charlotte. In 1935, Mainer's Mountaineers made their first recordings for the Victor label. While several of these selections convey a old-time string band feel, their most successful recording, "Maple on the Hill" (a sentimental ballad sung with Zeke Morris) portended the musical direction Wade would take after parting ways with his brother in 1937 to form his own band, the Sons of the Mountaineers. Mainer's new group de-emphasized the fiddle, increasingly focusing more and more on harmony vocals and a stark guitar/banjo-centered sound. The group had a sizable hit with the up-tempo "Sparkling Blue Eyes" in 1939, but the flip-side, "We Will Miss Him," describing a country family's attempts to deal with the loss of a loved one, more accurately captured the group's lyrical focus. The vast majority of the group's repertoire revolved around songs of a serious nature, most often centering around a religious theme. Even on a rounder tune like "Ramblin' Boy" the lyrics lead back to the consequences of one's actions, in this case, the impact of a young Rambler's absence on a fatherless country family. Only

Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music, 166; Rumble, Roy Acuff, 14; Schlappi, Roy Acuff, 109.

“Old Rueben” offers a portrait of a remorseless drifter and murderer; tellingly, it is one of the few songs of his pre-war sessions that showcases Mainer’s innovative two-finger banjo style.⁴⁹

With the addition of Jack and Curley Shelton to the group in 1941, Mainer’s band began to augment their sound with additional instruments and vocals. The group’s implementation of Curley Shelton’s mandolin work on the group’s final pre-war sessions (e.g. “Shake My Mother’s Hand for Me”) together with their four-part vocal harmonies (“I Can Tell You the Time”) serve as precursors to the approach many later bluegrass groups took to religious material. Immediately after the war, Mainer began recording again, this time adding an old-time fiddle to his pre-war guitar/banjo/mandolin musical base. In “He’s Coming to Us Dead” and “Searching for a Soldier’s Grave,” Mainer demonstrates his gravitation toward solemn lyrical subject matter, in these cases addressing the emotional impact of the human cost of war. In his uncompromising dedication to traditional country imagery and plaintive banjo-playing style, Wade Mainer eluded the demise of many early sting-band performers by veering a steady course between those who refused to alter their cacophonous approach and those who repudiated their unsophisticated roots. Undoubtedly, this helps to explain why Alan Lomax selected him (along with Josh

⁴⁹ John W. Morris, liner notes, Sacred Songs of Mother and Home: A Tribute to Wade Mainer, Old Homestead LP 90001, 1971; E. N. Tarantino, “Wade Mainer: Portrait of a Country Gentleman,” Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 18, No. 5 (November 1983): 26; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 122-123; Wade Mainer, interview with Doug Smith, n.p., n.d., Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Brad McCuen, “Mainer’s Discography,” Country Directory No. 4 (1962): 17-24.

White and Burl Ives) to perform at the White House in 1941 as a representative of American folk music. Mainer eventually retired in the early 1950s; he worked for General Motors in Flint, Michigan for twenty years before returning to performing.⁵⁰

Many historians view Wade Mainer as a transitional figure between old time and bluegrass music, largely due to his emphasis on traditional country lyrical themes and his popularization of the five-string banjo. Mainer, however, rarely displayed the velocity that characterized so much of early bluegrass. The Carlisle Brothers, on the other hand, merged old-time lyrics and newer instrumentation with speed in a way that unmistakably presaged bluegrass. While Bill and Cliff Carlisle never became bluegrass figures, their work with mandolinist Shannon Grayson on the eve of World War II places them squarely in a very small group of performers who laid the musical foundation for the sub-genre.

Bill and Cliff Carlisle's early years in central Kentucky exposed them to a variety of musical styles. From their father (who taught music at a local church), they learned hymns while local string-bands introduced them to old-time standards. Cliff developed an interest in Hawaiian music at an early age, later merging the acoustic steel guitar sound with the blues he heard African Americans play at the local courthouse. In the 1920s, Cliff (along with guitarist Wilbur Ball) traveled with a number of vaudeville troops and tent shows, eventually ending up on Louisville radio

⁵⁰ Constance Keith, "Gulf Coast Gossip," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1941): 4; Morris, Sacred Songs of Mother and Home; Tarantino, "Wade Mainer," 26, 28; Robert Shelton, The Country Music Story: A Picture History of Country and Western Music (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966) 143; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 123.

in 1930. In the wake of Jimmie Rodgers' popularity, Carlisle became a successful solo artist in the early 1930s, billed as "The Yodelin' Hobo." Despite starting out as a Jimmie Rodgers clone, Carlisle soon stepped out of Rodgers' shadow with his pioneering use of the Dobro steel guitar. Around 1935, he began a professional collaboration with his brother Bill, working at a variety of southeastern radio stations (together and separately) before settling in at Knoxville's WNOX in 1940. Bill was also a very capable yodeler and singer, but excelled as a flat-top guitarist, often creating two-guitar patterns on his own.⁵¹

The two brothers and Shannon Grayson traveled to New York City in July 1939, and again in September 1940 for a series of recordings for the Decca label. Lyrically, the songs explored a gamut of themes, ranging from the sentimental ("There'll Come a Time", "Somewhere Someone's Waiting for You") to the risqué ("Three Women to Every Man"). In this, they scarcely differed from most other string bands of the late 1930s. Musically, however, the trio's chemistry proved explosive, particularly on numbers that showcased the interplay between Bill Carlisle's unique cross-picking guitar playing and Grayson's rapid-fire mandolin solos. "Don't Let Me Worry Your Mind," "Gonna Raise a Ruckus Tonight," and "Go and Leave Me if You Wish To," in particular, roll along at a breakneck pace and spotlight Grayson's

⁵¹ Mark A. Humphrey, liner notes, Cliff Carlisle: Blues Yodeler & Steel Guitar Wizard, Arhoolie CD 7039, 1996; Wolfe, "Cliff Carlisle," 57-58; Wayne W. Daniel, "The Traditional Roots of Jumpin' Bill Carlisle, Veteran Singer of Novelty Songs," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 26, No. 12 (June 1992): 41-42; Malone, Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music, 27; Tony Russell, Blacks, Whites and Blues (New York: Stein and Day, 1970) 95-96.

abilities, while "Broken Heart" and "Go and Leave Me if You Wish To" illustrate Bill Carlisle's impressive playing style. The group's lower-pitched singing, Cliff Carlisle's bottleneck steel guitar, and the absence of a rolling banjo all preclude these selections from being termed bluegrass, but they certainly represent a departure from the string-band tradition and point toward the modernization of the old time sound after the war. Surprisingly, the Carlisle Brothers took another direction upon returning to recording in 1945. "Maggie, Get the Hammer" and "Baby, You Done Flubbed Your Dub on Me" provide examples of Bill Carlisle's post-war proclivity to novelty tunes, while "Roll on Your Weary Way" displays Cliff Carlisle's attachment to pre-war white country blues. In "Rainbow at Midnight," the group experiments with a mainstream country approach, with commercially successful results. "Dollar Bill Mama Blues" provides an example of what Jimmie Rodgers might have sounded like with an electric-guitar backing, while "Cast on a Sea of Sorrow" experiments with the post-war boogie beat. Cliff Carlisle drifted in and out of retirement in the late 1940s before giving up performing completely in the early 1950s. Bill organized a new group, the Carlises, eventually joining the Opry in 1953 on the heels of some very successful novelty recordings. In the years immediately before World War II, the Carlisle Brothers demonstrated a willingness to experiment with traditional country music sounds, merging Jimmie Rodgers' blues with fast-paced solos in an attempt to help bring country music into a new era of showmanship. Groups like the Carlisle Brothers provided a model for a younger generation of acoustic musicians once removed from

their old-time predecessors.⁵²

In their emphasis on individual showmanship and innovative musical techniques, the Carlisle Brothers and Roy Acuff reconfigured the complexion of the country string band. Several other groups also experimented with newer sounds, although few enjoyed anything close to Acuff's measure of success. Some, like Roy Hall and His Blue Ridge Entertainers, developed a strong sub-regional following. Born in Haywood City, North Carolina, Roy Hall (1907-1943) and his brother Hugh grew up in an area rich in the Appalachian musical tradition. They approached a career in music rather tentatively, however, opting for full-time employment in the Carolina cotton textile mills while only occasionally performing at local social gatherings. The two brothers were still working in the mills at the time of their first recording session in 1937. Soon thereafter, they acquired a radio spot on WSPA in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Within a year or so, the two brothers went their separate ways, with Roy staying on at WSPA with his newly-formed band, the Blue Ride Entertainers. After acquiring Dr. Pepper as a sponsor, the group moved to Roanoke's WDBJ in 1939, retaining their sponsorship at the new locale. Through their broadcasts, the group's following in the Shenendoah Valley mushroomed quickly, with the band splitting into two versions in order to meet all their personal appearance requests. Prior to Hall's death in 1943, the Blue Ridge Entertainers stood on the verge

⁵² Cary Ginell, The Decca Hillbilly Discography, 1927-1945 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989) 151-152; Wolfe, Kentucky Country, 65; Daniel, "Traditional Roots of Jumpin' Bill Carlisle," 42-43.

of national popularity.⁵³

While a basic two-guitar sound characterized Roy Hall's recordings with his brother, his recordings with the Blue Ridge Entertainers fall into the category of progressive string band music. Tommy Magness' old-time fiddling style dominates many of the group's recordings, showcased particularly on "The Natural Bridge Blues," "Pole Cat Blues," and a version of "The Wabash Cannonball." Hall's singing style, likewise, contrasts many of the smoother sounds appearing on country radio in the late 1930s. Nevertheless, Hall was progressive in his incorporation of western songs into both his radio and record repertoire, and in his occasional emphasis on the Dobro, played to great effect by Bill Brown on such numbers as "Don't Let Your Sweet Love Die" and "Little Sweetheart, Come and Kiss Me." Hall's eclectic tendencies turned up more frequently on his radio shows. In one particular program from 1941, he follows a song book pitch with a hymn, plugs his Dr. Pepper sponsor, then croons the western standard "South of the Border," before ending the program with a raucous breakdown. In style and repertoire, Hall offered an example for many other southeastern string bands to follow as a means to surviving the changes of the 1930s, namely, one characterized by the blending of western/popular material with

⁵³ Ivan M. Tribe, liner notes, Roy Hall and His Blue Ridge Entertainers, County LP CO-406, 1979; Kip Lornell, liner notes, Virginia Traditions: Early Roanoke Country Radio, Blue Ridge Institute Records LP 010, 1988; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 49; Kip Lornell, "Roanoke Country Radio From 1929-1954," Old Time Herald Vol. 1, No. 4 (May-July 1988): 25-26.

progressive sounds.⁵⁴

A few southeastern bands viewed even the Dobro as retrogressive. Hank Penny, for example, resisted suggestions to drop his electric steel guitar player from his radio band: "When the Opry told me that they would add our Radio Cowboys to their stable if Noel Boggs would drop the steel guitar and play Dobro—that infringed on our rights as free musicians to create and grow... We considered Acuff too hillbilly for our tastes." Penny represented a younger group of musicians entranced by the electric and swing sounds coming out of the Southwest. Prior to World War II, however, they remained a distinct minority on the southeastern country music scene.⁵⁵

Not even a string-band fiddler as renowned as Clayton McMichen could wrench country music out of its rural, southeastern predilections. As a boy growing up in northern Georgia, McMichen learned to play Viennese waltzes as well as traditional square dance numbers on the fiddle from his father and uncles. In his early twenties, he traveled to Atlanta, where a fellow musician taught him a longer-bowed, lower-pitched fiddling style that provided more room for jazzy improvisations. He made some unsuccessful recordings in this style around 1925, and even went so far as to assist in the creation of a new Fiddlers' Association designed to counteract the limitations of old-time fiddling. Ironically, by the late twenties he helped form the

⁵⁴ Rodney McElrea and August J. Vrchota, "The Hall Brothers and Roy Hall and His Blue Ridge Entertainers," Country News and Views Vol. 3, No. 4 (January 1964): 23-26; Virginia Traditions: Early Roanoke Country Radio.

⁵⁵ Hank Penny quoted in Ken Griffis, "Hank Penny: The Original 'Outlaw'?", John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 18, Nos. 65-66 (Spring/Summer 1982): 5.

Skillet Lickers, country music's most prolific traditional string band of the early commercial period. Eventually, he left the band to form his own Georgia Wildcats in 1931, gradually drifting further away from old-time country music. As Norm Cohen points out, while over ninety percent of the Skillet Lickers' repertoire consisted of traditional fiddle tunes and ballads, about two-thirds of McMichen's recording output with other groups learned more toward contemporary and popular numbers. Cohen points out that "McMichen...did not distinguish between 'country music' and 'pop music' or 'jazz,' but rather between 'old-fashioned music' and 'modern music.'" McMichen objected to the term hillbilly and endeavored to shake the dust off traditional country, to bring more variety to the old-time repertoire. In 1935, he organized a Dixieland jazz band that remained a fixture on Louisville radio in the 1940s, but in general, he and others like Hank Penny were unsuccessful in their attempts to inoculate jazz and popular components into the traditional string-band arrangement.⁵⁶

The Southwest provided an environment much more conducive to musical experimentation. D.K. Wilgus terms the Southwestern folk "urban hillbillies" because of the region's relatively early urbanization (as compared to the Southeast) and its willingness to acculturate to non-southern/non-rural social norms. Louisiana and Texas had over twenty percent of its white citizenry living in large cities in 1940. Socially, the Southwest of the 1930s increasingly became less rural and more urban in

⁵⁶ Norm Cohen, "Clayton McMichen: His Life and Music," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 11, No. 39 (Autumn 1975): 121-122; Cohen, "The Skillet Lickers," 240.

residence and outlook. Musically, by the mid-1930s, the popularity of western swing opened the door for many southwestern musicians to begin experimenting with electrified instruments and jazzy solos. Some, like Charles Mitchell, began their careers as steel guitar players in the Hawaiian string bands that enjoyed popularity in the twenties. Eventually, Mitchell teamed up with Jimmie Davis in the 1930s to create some of the most groundbreaking country music of the decade.⁵⁷

One of eleven children born to a tenant farmer's family in Jackson Parish, Louisiana, Jimmie Davis grew up in a household filled with music. His father enjoyed playing the fiddle while his mother often sang traditional country songs and old-time hymns around the house. Davis was also drawn to the music of the nearby African American churches and to the blues he heard on records and in the nearby cotton fields. As a child, he sang at school, in churches, and at various social gatherings like so many other southern youngsters in the period. More atypically from many other children from similar demographic backgrounds, he attended college, where he sang in a gospel quartet. He also performed on street corners as a means to earning enough money to pay his tuition. In 1927, he received a Master of Arts from Louisiana State University and accepted a teaching job at The Dodd College for Women in Shreveport. The following year he began appearing on Shreveport's KWKH and recorded his first sides for the station's local label. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, he recorded several Jimmie Rodgers-like blues numbers for the RCA-Victor label, but

⁵⁷ Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," 148; Rich Kienzle, "Steel," Country Music Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 1976): 37-38.

his first real success as a country music performer came in 1934, when he recorded his first hit, "Nobody's Darlin' But Mine" for the Decca label. As the 1930s progressed, he began drifting away from an acoustic guitar-dominated sound and began incorporating more fiddle and electric instrumentation into his arrangements. By 1939, Charles Mitchell's amplified steel-guitar centered band was backing him on his Decca sessions. While he still leaned toward traditional lyrical imagery ("Born to Be Blue," "The Last Letter"), he also began flirting with pop music ("My Blue Heaven"). Davis altered the rhythm acoustic/steel guitar/fiddle sound that he established with Mitchell when he added a trumpet player and pianist to the group in early 1940. With "You Are My Sunshine," Davis began experimenting with Dixieland Jazz, while "Walkin' My Blues Away" hinted at western swing.⁵⁸

In his singing, Davis maintained a more traditional approach. Davis' vocal resemblance to Bing Crosby is offset by the distinct country feel he brings to the material, utterly believable and emotionally effective. In "There's a Chill on the Hill Tonight," Davis delivers one of country music's most effective vocal performances. While many of Davis' songs evoke an uptempo, Southwestern feel, he rarely swaggers with a western swing vocalist's flippancy. Similarly, in his choice of lyrical material,

⁵⁸ Grady McWhiney and Gary B. Mills, "Jimmie Davis and His Music," Journal of American Culture Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 1983): 54-55; Jason Berry, "The Sunshine Man: A Tale of Stardom, Political Heart, and Legendary Music," Reckon Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1995): 50-51; Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night": A History of Louisiana Country Music, diss., Tulane University, 1995 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 136, 155-158; Jimmie Davis, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 8 July 1976, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Ronnie F. Pugh, liner notes, Jimmie Davis, MCA CD MCAD-10087, 1991; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 107; Ginell, Decca Hillbilly Discography, 167-170.

he remains embedded in the older country music traditions. Nearly seventy-five percent of his recordings from 1939 to 1945 pertain to failed relationships. Less than ten percent fall under the classification of lighthearted/upbeat songs. The shuffling upbeat tempo of songs like "Grievin' My Heart out for You" and "Is It Too Late Now?" belies the utter despondency of the lyrics. After the war, Davis gradually drifted towards the gospel genre, but prior to 1945 he was one of country music's most prodigious vocalists. Jimmie Davis simultaneously introduced thousands of country music listeners to electric instruments while reinforcing their preference for mournful lyrics.

The Shelton Brothers represent another southwestern country act that successfully incorporated electric instruments into their traditional repertoire. No other progressive group trifled as patently with western swing as the Sheltons. In their resistance to a full espousal with western swing, however, the Shelton Brothers retained an affiliation with older country styles. In many ways, they provide the musical manifestation of Wilgus' characterization of the "urban hillbilly."

The Shelton brothers were born Bob and Joe Attlessey on a cotton farm in east Texas. As teenagers, they performed at several local functions before traveling to the oil-boom town of Longview in 1929, where they played in cafes for meals and at root-beer stands for tips. They first appeared on radio in late 1929 as the Lone Star Cowboys in Tyler, Texas. In 1935, Dave Kapp of Decca Records approached them about making some records, and at their first session suggested they change their name. On the strength of their early collaborations with fiddler Curly Fox ("Just

Because,” “Deep Elem Blues”), the Shelton Brothers became one of Decca’s most prolific acts in the late thirties, cutting over 150 sides for the label between 1935 and 1941.⁵⁹

In the late thirties, the Shelton Brothers incorporated more up-tempo, bluesy numbers into their act, but they never completely excluded old-time and sentimental pieces from their performances on radio and record. Even as they drifted closer to western swing in their musical approach, they clung to their hillbilly image. In 1938 and 1939, they made several recordings with some of western swing’s finest musicians (including Bob Dunn, Leo Raley, and Cliff Bruner). Raley undoubtedly influenced Joe Shelton’s decision to play an amplified mandola on the group’s 1939-1941 sessions, showcased on such numbers as “Old Age Pension Blues” and “I’ll Be Seeing You in Dallas, Alice.” Lyrically, the ‘39-’41 sessions offered several humorous glimpses into the urban hillbilly’s ambivalence towards socio-cultural developments (“How Times Have Changed,” “Parking Meter Blues,” “You Can’t Do that to Me”). The Sheltons’ penchant for nostalgic pieces shows up on “There’ll Always be a Maple on the Hill” and “Tell Me With Your Blue Eyes.” With approximately one-third of their songs centering on upbeat and humorous themes, the Sheltons represent a departure from the traditional country music act. They also atypically add humorous touches more often to their sketches of failed relationships. Nevertheless, in the refusal to succumb completely to southwestern impulses and their unwavering

⁵⁹ Ivan M. Tribe, liner notes, The Shelton Brothers: Bob and Joe, Old Homestead LP OHS-201, 1993; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 169-170; Tucker, “Louisiana Saturday Night,” 77-78, 104.

leanings toward their rural roots, the Shelton Brothers sustained an affiliation with their southeastern counterparts.⁶⁰

The Shelton Brothers were among several country music acts in the 1930s that flirted with popular and southwestern motifs. Many others explored the possibilities of incorporating ethnic and racial musical traditions into their repertoire. The cultural interaction that took place between working-class African Americans and whites in the South on farms and in churches laid the foundation for this trend. Zeke Morris recalls the environment that exposed him to the musical culture of African Americans in rural North Carolina:

Back in those days, we didn't know what integration was, because we was raised up around black people. We worked together, played together, and often ate at each other's houses. That's the way it was back in those days. I've seen many a time when black people would come to the white church. So I went to the black church to learn their spiritual singing.

On early country music recordings, the African American influence emerges most prominently on the offerings of Dapper Dan Hutchison, Dock Boggs, and the team of Tom Darby and Jimmie Tarlton. Other groups, like the Allen Brothers, made liberal use of the "blues" term, utilizing it in name only on many songs that bore little, if any resemblance to the black musical genre. As Charles Wolfe explains, "most were using the term blues cavalierly, tacking it on to any jazzy song, or any song that had the

⁶⁰ Ginell, Decca Hillbilly Discography, 254-256.

suggestion of a lament or of double entendre.”⁶¹

Jimmie Rodgers did more to popularize both the symbolic “blues” and the real folk blues than any other country music performer. Much of his exposure to the blues from his contact with African Americans while growing up in Mississippi, but he also absorbed the music working with blacks as a railroad man. In affixing a yodel at the end of stanzas, however, Rodgers deviated from standard blues. The effect of the blues yodel depended on the mood of the song. In light-hearted, symbolic “blues” selections, the yodel accentuated the light-heartedness of the performance, whereas on more somber songs it served as an expression of lament or sorrow. Rogers bequeathed his use of the blue yodel to a number of acts of the 1930s; few utilized it as effectively as two brother duets, the Callahans and the Delmores.⁶²

Walter and Homer Callahan hailed from Madison County, North Carolina, where they began appearing together at local venues in their early teens. On the heels of an impressive performance at the Rhododendron Festival at Asheville in 1933, they began appearing on records and radio. “She’s My Curly Headed Baby,” recorded in 1934, showcased their Jimmie Rodgers-influenced yodeling and became their most identifiable song. Like so many other groups, they leap-frogged from station to station before ending up in Texas in 1941, where they adopted their new names (Bill and Joe)

⁶¹ Zeke Morris quoted in Erbsen, “Wiley and Zeke,” 46; Charles K. Wolfe, “The White Man’s Blues, 1922-1940,” Journal of Country Music Vol. 15, No. 3 (1993): 38-43.

⁶² Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 87.

and remained for most of the 1940s.⁶³

The Callahan Brothers began as a vocal and guitar duet team and remained so for most of the 1930s. They culled much of their repertoire in their early period from older tunes, but also wrote and sang many songs in the Jimmie Rodgers blue yodel tradition. Their early penchant for humorous and rounder-centered lyrics, however, waned as the decade progressed. Their recordings from 1939 to 1941, in particular, featured more melancholy, and in some cases, tragic lyrics. "Oh Lord, Show Me the Light," "The Best Pal I Ever Had," and "They're at Rest Together" all center around the deaths of young people, while "Dovie Darling," "Sad Memories," and "Lonesome Freight Train Blues" explore heartbroken lovers' emotional suffering. The traditional "John Henry" and comical "A Jealous Woman Won't Do," though, represent the song-types most listeners associated the Callahan Brothers with. In the 1940s, they augmented their sound with Paul Buskirk's jazz-influenced mandolin playing and after the war began adopting honky-tonk instrumentation (weeping steel guitar, tinkling piano, etc.) In the late 1940s and early 1950s, they toured as the Crazy Callahans, with Homer (Bill) becoming renown for his comedic abilities. As the 1950s wore on, they gradually terminated their musical partnership, with Joe returning to Asheville and Bill settling in Dallas. The Callahan Brothers stand out as one of the few traditional acts to survive the war, mainly due to their musical flexibility and comic talent, and in doing so, kept alive both the blue yodel and duet singing

⁶³ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 110; Ivan M. Tribe, "Bill and Joe Callahan: A Great Brother Duet," Old Time Music No. 16 (September 1975): 16.

traditions.⁶⁴

While the Callahans were blending old-time singing and traditional country songs with the blue yodel, the Delmore Brothers were experimenting with ways to merge white country blues with a more sophisticated vocal and musical style. Unsurpassed in their collective abilities as singers, songwriters, and musicians, Alton and Rabon Delmore remain two of country music's most overlooked performers. The Delmore Brothers embraced new technology and new sounds while remaining explicitly fastened to their southern roots. They established the prototype for country music harmony and, along with Sam McGee and Maybelle Carter, popularized lead-guitar playing in the Southeast. Last, but not least, they excelled as songwriters, leaving behind scores of memorable lyrics and haunting melodies. The Delmores eclipsed every other country music act of the 1930s in all-around talent and rival Roy Acuff and Jimmie Rodgers in importance.⁶⁵

Alton and Rabon Delmore grew up in northern Alabama, the sons of a sharecropper. At an early age, Alton learned the acapella, shape-note method of singing from his uncle and mother. It was an harmonic singing style pioneered in southwest Virginia after the Civil War and popularized (via hymnal publishers)

⁶⁴ Bob Pinson, "The Callahan Brothers," Country Directory No. 2 (April 1961): 5-6; Tribe, "Bill and Joe Callahan," 15-18; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 110-112; Daniel C. Cooper, Lefty Frizzell: The Honky-Tonk Life of Country Music's Greatest Singer (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1995) 93-94.

⁶⁵ Bob Artis, Bluegrass: From the Lonesome Wail of a Mountain Love Song to the Hammering Drive of the Scuggs-style Banjo, the Story of an American Musical Tradition (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975) 14.

throughout the rural South in the early 1900s. As a teenager, Alton Delmore published his first songs in a shape-note songbook. In the mid-twenties, the brothers began performing locally and on the strength of their appearance at a musical contest in Athens (and with the encouragement of the Allen Brothers), began making records in the early 1930s. From the outset, their recordings blended gospel harmony with a bluesy sound. As a youngster, Alton taught himself to play guitar, influenced largely by the Jimmie Rodgers and Riley Puckett records he listened to, as well as the African American blues he heard. Eventually, Alton developed a unique guitar style which incorporated jazzy improvisation and bluesy chords with an emphasis on melody. Rabon also became a skilled guitarist, playing in a similar fashion on his four-string tenor guitar. In 1933, they became regulars on the Grand Ole Opry, bringing to the show a professionalism, an image, and a soft harmonic singing style uncharacteristic of most Opry acts. With a vocal approach that plainly contrasted with rudimentary mountain harmony and in a rejection of standard hillbilly garb (in favor of matching checkered shirts or jackets), the Delmore Brothers brought a quiet dignity to the Grand Ole Opry and to country music. Alton Delmore attributes a great deal of their success to the merging of their soft harmony with technology:

There was something divine in the (microphone)...that helped us immensely and changed us from two country farm boy singers to something 'up-town' and acceptable to listeners who bought records and listened to radio programs.

That was the whole secret of our good luck. Our voices took well to the microphone.

The Delmores brought country music to urbanites (with crossover hits like "More Pretty Girls Than One") and popular music to rural listeners (by playing instrumental versions of standards like "Stormy Weather" at personal appearances). With their intricate harmonies and complex guitar runs, the Delmore Brothers bridged the gap between the Jimmie Rodgers sound of the 1930s and the bluegrass of the late forties, and portended the success of the Everly Brothers and the Louvin Brothers in the 1950s.⁶⁶

On their records of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Delmore Brothers built upon a variety of southern musical and lyrical traditions. Charles Wolfe terms their lyrical repertoire "an odd fusion (of) the unabashed sentimentality of 19th-century popular music and the frank, realistic portrayal of marital difficulties, unrequited love, and rambling, so characteristic of modern country lyrics." While the Delmores were quite capable of writing humorous tunes (i.e. "Brown's Ferry Blues," "Go Easy, Mabel"), they excelled at melancholy portrayals of lost and wandering souls constantly traveling the rivers and railroads of the South in search of an elusive contentment ("There's Trouble on My Mind," "I'll Never Fall in Love Again"); in most cases, their longings are never nursed. Like Hank Williams a decade later, the Delmores borrowed heavily from the natural landscape to convey a sense of

⁶⁶ Delmore, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity, 1-19, 61, 89; Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers, 28-30; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 21-22; Charles K. Wolfe, "The Delmore Brothers on the Opry," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 24, No. 4 (October 1989): 16, 17; John Lilly, "The Delmore Brothers," Old Time Herald Vol. 3, No. 5 (Fall 1992): 9, 10; Lynn Pruett, "The Delmore Brothers," Alabama Heritage No. 5 (Summer 1987): 25-26.

woefulness in the face of life's disappointments. Bluesy guitar passages weave in and out and around intricate harmonies to create an atmosphere of constant motion, pulling listeners into their tales of desperation. The Delmore Brothers mesmerized audiences with their musical and vocal abilities, and maintained a huge following among Grand Ole Opry listeners prior to their departure from the program in 1938. They maintained a two-guitar, duet harmony approach for most the thirties and early forties, but, like the Callahan Brothers, emerged from World War II with a willingness to experiment with newer sounds that brought renewed success. With a progressive approach to the country-blues tradition of the 1930s, the Delmore Brothers elevated country music lyrics to a level of poetry while simultaneously introducing a more complex musical approach. The Delmores cast a long shadow on country music's development in their songwriting, singing and musical abilities. Their vocal, lyrical and playing styles remain ageless.⁶⁷

The shape-note school of harmony singing popularized by the Delmore Brothers in the mid-thirties spawned a number of other significant country music duets, none more popular in the Southeast than the Blue Sky Boys. While the Delmores combined bluesy guitar work and southern lyrical imagery with intricate harmony, the Blue Sky Boys merged genteel traditions with the singing style. The Blue Sky Boys looked to the parlor and the church for inspiration and in doing so, tapped into a wellspring of material that appealed to thousands of rural southerners. To sentimental and sorrowful pieces, they brought velvet harmonies and stark

⁶⁷ Wolfe, Grand Ole Opry, 124; Delmore, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity, 215.

instrumentation perfectly suited to radio technology. Dressed in suits and ties, singing soft and low, they repudiated the string-band tradition, offering listeners an alternative to early country music's raucousness. Uncompromising and unremitting in their commitment to the domestic tradition, the Blue Sky Boys filled a void in country music and as a result became one of the genre's most popular duets on the eve of World War II.⁶⁸

Bill and Earl Bolick first heard many of the old songs that they later rejuvenated around their parents' house in western North Carolina. Their father (a shape-note school alumnus) taught them many hymns, but they also developed an appreciation of the traditional secular material that they heard in the performances of early folk singers like Doc Hopkins, Mac and Bob, and Bradley Kincaid. After a brief period on the radio in North Carolina, the two brothers (along with fiddler Homer Sherrill) traveled to Atlanta in 1936, where they began appearing on WGST. The Bolicks recorded their first sides (sans Sherrill) later that year for Victor's Bluebird label. From the outset, their recorded output stressed sentimental and religious material derived from both traditional and contemporary sources. Technically, the Bolicks were not songwriters, but they excelled as interpreters, indelibly stamping every selection they sang with their own unique style. While their radio performances often included fiddling, on record they maintained a guitar/mandolin format throughout the pre-war period. To restrained and melodic instrumentation, the Blue

⁶⁸ William A. Bolick, "Bill Bolick's Own Story of the Blue Sky Boys," Sing Out Vol. 17, No. 2 (April-May 1967): 19.

Sky Boys added soft, close harmony to create an atmosphere of intimacy uncharacteristic of most country music of the time. Bill Bolick sums up the approach they took to their musical interpretations:

Both of us realized from the very beginning that in order to produce good, clear harmony, one had to sing at a moderate pace in order to be understood, and softly if your voices were to blend... We always felt the singing was more important (than) the instrumentals, and for that reason didn't make the instrumental work outstanding. We tried to develop a style of playing that would enhance our voices.⁶⁹

In their choice of song material, the Blue Sky Boys demonstrated a fondness for sorrowful and sentimental lyrics. In many of their selections, lost and wandering souls find strength in memories of the happier times of their youth ("Hymns My Mother Sang," "Have No Desire to Roam"), other times inspiration comes from a more Divine source ("Whispering Hope," "This Evening Light," "Kneel at the Cross"). Occasionally, in up-tempo (and uplifting) tunes, displaced southern migrants working in the North look forward to the prospect of returning home to devoted sweethearts ("When Roses Bloom in Dixieland"), or, in the absence of loved ones, turn to one another for camaraderie ("Are You From Dixie"). More characteristically, however, tragic figures abound in their pre-war recordings: a woman driven to suicide by lost

⁶⁹ Bolick, "I Always Liked the Type of Music That I Play"; Daniel, Pickin' on Peachtree, 155; Bill Bolick quoted in Wayne W. Daniel, Bill and Earl Bolick Remember the Blue Sky Boys," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 16, No. 3 (September 1981): 18.

love ("The Butcher's Boy"), a broken-hearted man driven to rambling and crime ("Short Life of Trouble"), a widower left to take care of a houseful of children ("Since the Angels Took My Mother Far Away"), and a poor, young man pleading with a conductor to remain on a train so he can see his dying mother ("East Bound Train").⁷⁰

The Blue Sky Boys deliberately chose the sentimental, the tragic, and especially the older hymns to record because of the scarcity of country music acts exploring this repertoire. Constance Keith, columnist for The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder, attributed the Bolicks' success to this approach: "The boys...feature many songs that are not used by other artists, thereby keeping their programs just a little different." Separated by the war, the Bolicks returned to radio and recording afterwards, using the same approach (although augmenting their sound with a fiddle and a bass) applied to more contemporary material. Despite the success of their interpretations of the Bailes Brothers' "Dust on the Bible" and Karl and Harty's "Kentucky," however, their record company grew increasingly disenchanted with their stark musical approach and choice of material, a development that contributed to the brothers' decision to retire from the music industry in 1951. While their records failed to sell substantially after the war, the Blue Sky Boys maintained a loyal following on radio and at personal appearances right up to the time of their retirement, demonstrating that their uncharacteristic approach and undeniable talents never went

⁷⁰ Daniel, "Bill and Earl Bolick Remember the Blue Sky Boys," 18.

out of style.⁷¹

Several other duet-based groups flourished in the late thirties that displayed more of affection for the string-band tradition than the Bolick brothers did, namely the Morris Brothers and the team of Karl Davis and Hartford Taylor (Karl and Harty). Both acts featured a guitar-mandolin approach predominately, but unlike the Blue Sky Boys they occasionally augmented their sound with a fiddle and a banjo. Karl and Harty, in fact, began their radio careers as part of a string band, the Kentucky Krazy Kats, on Louisville's WHAS with mandolin-pioneer Doc Hopkins in the late 1920s. In the early thirties, they began appearing regularly on WLS as a duet, on a daily show as well as on the Saturday night National Barn Dance. In their quest for fresh material for their daily program, Karl and Harty introduced their listeners to several Carter Family numbers and old gospel tunes, but soon began writing their own songs. With songs like "I'm Just Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail" and "Prisoner's Dream," the duet established themselves among country music first important songwriters. On their recordings, they sometimes recorded with a string band ("Old Rattler," "Ridin' that Hump-Backed Mule," "I'm S-A-V-E-D"); for the most part, as Karl Davis explains, they preferred a more basic approach: "A mandolin and a guitar have always gone together well... They give you that simplicity that I think most anybody like in music... Too many instruments...(and) you lose the simplicity and the personality."

⁷¹ Constance Keith, "Gulf Coast Gossip," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 2, No. 6 (September 1941): 5; Bolick, "I Always Liked the Type of Music That I Play"; William A. Bolick, liner notes, The Blue Sky Boys on Radio, Volume One, Copper Creed CD CCCD-0120, 1993; Douglas B. Green, liner notes, The Blue Sky Boys, Bluebird LP AXM2-5525, 1976.

While the duo's attempts to modernize their sound and repertoire in the 1940s proved awkward, they remained a staple on Chicago radio throughout the decade.⁷²

Wiley and Zeke Morris represent another duet act of the late 1930s that flirted with a string band sound before settling down to a guitar-mandolin approach. Born and raised in western North Carolina, they first performed in public as a trio with their brother George. Zeke began his professional career with Mainer's Mountaineers in 1933 and in 1935 recorded the popular "Maple on the Hill" with Wade Mainer. In 1937, Wiley, Zeke, and Mainer appeared on radio together in Asheville and Raleigh before Mainer's departure to form the Sons of the Mountaineers. By the next year, they were playing with a fiddler and a banjoist in Danville, Virginia on WBTM. Zeke Morris quit performing briefly in 1938 to work in a Gastonia cotton mill, but moved with his brother to Asheville in 1939 where they settled in with a guitar-mandolin approach. Split up by the war, they reunited briefly in 1945 before retiring from performing to open an auto repair business.⁷³

Although they appeared briefly on radio as part of a string band in Virginia, the Morris Brothers opted for a more streamlined approach on their recordings. Their first recordings featured Homer Sherrill on fiddle, but on their third session (February 1939) they accompanied their duet vocals with just a guitar and a mandolin. "Let Me Be Your Salty Dog" (a novelty number from 1938) became their first big seller, but

⁷² Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 113; Wolfe, Kentucky Country, 53-55; Karl Davis interview.

⁷³ Rodney McElrea, "The Morris Brothers," Country News and Views Vol. 3, No. 4 (April 1965): 6-8; Erbsen, "Wiley and Zeke," 40-50.

more often they concentrated on sentimental and religious pieces. Although they recorded relatively few tragic tales, they worked well in this theme, as on "The Story of Charlie Lawson" (a tale of a man who murders most of his family) and "Little Nellie" (where a child dies). "Dream of the Miner's Child" deals with a child's premonition of an impending coal mining accident, and remains one of their most effective performances, highlighted by Zeke Morris' bluesy mandolin solo. On their last pre-war recordings, Homer Sherrill reappears on the mainstay "Wabash Cannonball, No. 2" and "One Little Word," the latter a story of childhood sweethearts kept apart by the woman's parents because of the man's economic status. In their brief reunion after the war, the Morris Brothers continued to emphasize the tragic, as on "Grave Upon the Green Hillside," where a man driven to rambling by his love's presumed infidelity returns home to find that she has died of a broken heart. A new version of "Salty Dog Blues" suggests that the Morris Brothers may have become a successful bluegrass act had they not chosen more stable employment to support their families.⁷⁴

Although not bluegrass groups per se, the Morris Brothers, Karl and Harty, and the Blue Sky Boys popularized the instrument that became the focal point of early bluegrass, the mandolin. Before the success of the harmony groups of the 1930s, many country musicians and fans failed to recognize the mandolin's potential. In the mountains where Zeke Morris grew up, local folks referred to the oddly shaped instrument as a "tater bug." Brought over from Europe in the 1700s, the mandolin did

⁷⁴ McElrea, "The Morris Brothers," 9-10.

not become popular in the United States until the large Italian immigration of the late 1800s. Riding the wave of the mandolin fad, the Gibson manufacturing company remodeled the instrument (with a flat back) and began an aggressive campaign to market it through mail order catalogs after 1900. While it became increasingly popular among the middle class in the 1910s, it remained an oddity in the rural South until the early 1930s. No one really thought of the mandolin as a country music instrument before Doc Hopkins and Lester McFarland (of Mac and Bob) pioneered its use on radio barn dances in the 1920s and early 1930s. Mac and Bob's move from WNOX, Knoxville to 50,000 watt WLS in 1931 certainly did a great deal to popularize the instrument among a younger generation of country music fans. The harmony groups finalized its legitimacy in the mid-late thirties, but one man did more than any other to bring it to the forefront of pre-war country music.⁷⁵

Bill Monroe was born in western Kentucky, the youngest of six children. Listening to his mother sing old time songs, he developed a fondness for singing that he nurtured at church singing schools and at Sunday services. Around the age of eight, his older brothers bequeathed to him the unpopular mandolin, which he soon taught himself to play in his own unique style. As he recalls: "I wanted to have a mandolin style of my own, not play like anybody else. There wasn't many mandolin players in the country when I started." By the time he reached his teens, Monroe was accompanying his fiddle-playing uncle Pen at local dances. Through his uncle and a

⁷⁵ Erbsen, "Wiley and Zeke," 42; Mark Humphrey, The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys: 1945-1949 (New York: Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., 1992) 11-12; Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," 220-222.

local black fiddler named Arnold Schultz, Monroe learned a number of fiddle tunes. Sometime in the mid-twenties, his older brothers (Birch and Charlie) traveled north in search of employment, eventually landing jobs in an Indiana oil refinery. Bill joined them in 1929, and the three soon began playing local dances. In 1934, Bill and Charlie accepted a sponsored-radio spot in Iowa, with Birch opting to stay behind.⁷⁶

As the Monroe Brothers, Bill and Charlie became one of the Southeast's most formidable duets. In their emphasis on traditional and religious songs, the Monroes differed little from many other duet groups, but in their tendency to play faster and sing higher, they reached a level of musical and vocal dexterity matched only by the Delmore Brothers. Between 1936 and 1938 they recorded some sixty songs for the Bluebird label, many showcasing Bill's aggressive mandolin playing. Karl Davis was among the many country musicians impressed by Monroe's feverish style: "I've never heard anybody play as fast in my life...Nobody ever heard a mandolin like that." After the duet broke up in 1938, Bill traveled to Little Rock, where he formed his first band, the Kentuckians; later that year, he moved to Atlanta, where he changing the band's name to the Blue Grass Boys and began experimenting with a number of musicians and sounds. After months of rigorous rehearsals, the group auditioned for the Grand Ole Opry, with impressive results. As Monroe recalls: "Judge Hay and Harry Stone and David Stone....said I had more perfect music for the station than any music they'd ever heard." His propulsive performance of Jimmie Rodgers' "Mule

⁷⁶ Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 28-32; Bill Monroe quoted in Charles K. Wolfe, "Bluegrass Touches: An Interview with Bill Monroe," Old Time Music No. 16 (September 1975): 6; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 324-325; Wolfe, Kentucky Country, 98-100.

Skinner Blues" elicited a similar response from Grand Ole Opry listeners. His Blue Grass Boys soon became one of the show's greatest attractions, and one of country music's biggest draws.⁷⁷

An atmosphere of experimentation dominates Bill Monroe's pre-war recordings with Clyde Moody (harmony vocal, lead guitar), Tommy Magness (fiddle), and Willie Egbert "Cousin Wilbur" Wesbrooks on bass. On two Jimmie Rodgers covers, he displays two elements that he would later incorporate into the bluegrass sound: speed ("Muleskinner Blues") and what is commonly referred to as a "high lonesome" vocal ("Blue Yodel, # 7"). Appropriately, Monroe sets the pace for "Muleskinner Blues," playing rhythm acoustic guitar, but plays mandolin on the remainder of the selections. "Back Up and Push," "Orange Blossom Special," and "Katy Hill" represent early attempts to modernize the string band sound by augmenting it with mandolin or approaching it with greater velocity. Tommy Magness' fiddle dominates several tunes (including the conservative "No Letter Today" and "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight"), but Monroe steps to the forefront on such numbers as "Honky Tonk Swing" and "Cryin' Holy Unto My Lord." In one sense, the pre-war sessions hearken back to the old-time tradition, particularly in their emphasis on instrumental and elementary vocals. On the other hand, however,

⁷⁷ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 115-116; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 34-35, 42; Karl Davis interview; Edward Morris, liner notes, The Essential Bill Monroe and the Monroe Brothers, RCA CD RCA07863-67450-2, 1997; Bill Monroe quoted in Charles K. Wolfe, "Bluegrass Touches," 11; Neil V. Rosenberg, "Blue Moon of Kentucky: Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, and the Birth of Bluegrass," Country: The Music and the Musicians, 191.

Monroe clearly strives to break free of its constraints in his employment of the mandolin and propensity to play tunes at a pace unsuitable for dancing.⁷⁸

Monroe continued to drift further from the older sound when he returned to the recording studio in 1945 with a revamped version of the Blue Grass Boys. The February 1945 session with an aggregation that included Tex Willis (guitar), Howard Watts (bass), Chubby Wise (fiddle) and Sally Ann Forrester (accordion) marks the closest Monroe ever came to successfully working within the constraints of mainstream country music. Attuned to what audiences wanted to hear from two years of touring, Monroe entered Billboard's top ten with the self-penned "Kentucky Waltz" and his interpretation of the traditional "Footprints in the Snow." With "Rocky Road Blues" and "Blue Grass Special," Monroe clearly stood on the brink of bluegrass, but at that point he did not possess the appropriate band to make the final plunge. Monroe was not able to free himself from contemporary country influences and incarnate the vision that inspired his radical interpretation of Jimmie Rodgers' "Muleskinner Blues" until after the war.⁷⁹

Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and other progressive acts strove to adapt country music to technological changes and alterations in listeners' preferences in the late thirties and early forties. In professionalizing and domesticating country music, they essentially legitimized its existence, dispelling many of the negative connotations associated with the term "hillbilly music." On the eve of World War II, country music

⁷⁸ Morris, The Essential Bill Monroe and the Monroe Brothers.

⁷⁹ Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 52, 62.

continued to function primarily as a form of rural, southern entertainment, but it was also steadily distancing itself from its obtrusive past. The family-friendly radio barn dances struck a fatal blow to risqué white country blues, while the microphone rendered the louder string bands passé at best, foolish at worst. Discarding the hillbilly garb of the twenties, Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff, and others sought alternative, less offensive images for country music performers. Dressed in jodhpurs and a tie, Bill Monroe looked more like a country gentleman than a southern rube and Roy Acuff's sport coat attire more accurately reflected the business-savvy he possessed. Those who led the movement to sanitize, professionalize, and domesticate country music, however, encountered one impassible obstacle, namely, the genre's continued association with the rural South. The lyrics of country music songs clearly placed the genre in the southern, rural tradition and rustic humor continued to comprise a good portion of the radio barn dance programs and personal appearance shows. One look at the Grand Ole Opry audience was enough to convince many Americans that country music was a plebian pursuit. Prior to its nationalization, however, country music remained immune to the condescending and derisive remarks of northern writers. The musical genre, however, faced a more formidable foe in upper and middle class southerners openly hostile to its existence.⁸⁰

As the home of the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville became a cultural battleground

⁸⁰ Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 41, 48; Patrick Carr, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken: the Changing Image of Country Music," Country: The Music and the Musicians, 486.

in the late 1920s and early 1930s with the city's bourgeois facing off against country music enthusiasts. As steel guitarist Joe Talbot points out:

Nashville simple did not want this trash in this town. The city of Nashville, as an entity, was very embarrassed and ashamed of this bunch of hillbillies that were wondering around here...This city was principally an educational, religious institutional, and financial town and a country music show simply wasn't relevant to (any) of these things.

Seemingly harmless, the Grand Ole Opry became a bone of contention almost immediately after its premiere. In an early article on the program from 1938, Jack Harris points out: “When the Grand Ole Opry started there was an immediate protest from the Nashville citizenry. Solemn Old Judge Hay was accused of making the city the laughing stock of the nation—the hillbilly capital.” In the mid-twenties, an attempt to suspend the Opry’s broadcasts and fill its airtime with more popular music was thwarted by a torrent of letters protesting the notion. After the failure of this coup d’etat, the city cultural elite begrudgingly endured a peaceful co-existence with the program and its followers. They surely seethed at the frenzy that accompanied the premiere of the movie, “Grand Ole Opry” in late June 1940. A journalist from Variety described the scene:

With hundreds of visitors in (the) city, the ‘hill folk’ staged (a) mammoth square dance in Memorial Square, (in) the heart of the city. A parade of victorias, surreys, buggies and wagons, all with old-time trimmings, led the radio stars of (the) picture to the premier.

In 1943, when the Grand Ole Opry extended an invitation to then-governor Prentice Cooper to attend a party celebrating the program's coast to coast hookup, Cooper adamantly refused, stating he wanted no part in the "circus," adding that he believed Roy Acuff was disgracing the state and the city in general by making it the nation's "hillbilly capital."⁸¹

While Nashville was the flashpoint of the struggle between country music culture and middle-class values, contempt for the genre and its followers pervaded in other southern urban areas as well. Part of this negative bias toward country music stemmed from a prejudice that many middle-class and urban southerners felt toward their rural neighbors. The trickling migration of displaced tenant farmers to southern urban areas heightened these class issues. Jack Kirby points out that urbanites in Virginia mocked migrants from North Carolina during this period, and offers this recollection of a Knoxville's first exposure to newcomers from the Appalachian hills: "I'll tell you I never before knew that such people existed. Most of them had come in off of the mountains somewhere and they had such a funny way of talking that plenty of times I wouldn't know what they were saying." A combination of unfamiliarity with folk culture and an unwillingness to be associated with what country music symbolized contributed more than anything else to the antagonism many

⁸¹ Joe Talbot, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hendersonville, 3 May 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Harris, "True Story of the Famous WSM Grand Ole Opry," 30; Wolfe, Tennessee Strings, 61; "WSM, Nashville Host to N.Y. Admen." Variety Vol. 139, No. 4 (3 July 1940): 24; Minnie Pearl, Minnie Pearl: An Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980) 142; Zolotow, "Hillbilly Boom," 38.

upper-class southerners felt towards the genre. A prominent West Virginian expressed these sentiments in commenting on country music's rising popularity within his state: "If the name of West Virginia is mentioned, it is immediately associated with hill billy music and a suggestion of a social inferiority which constitutes nothing short of libel upon the name of the state." Members of the nouveau bourgeoisie attempting to disassociate themselves from their rustic roots exhibited a malevolence towards country music for somewhat different reasons. In this light, Roy Acuff's assessment of his cultural opponents stands to reason: "I always felt that these same people who were putting on airs and putting down our music had the very same background I and other performers did."⁸²

The lofty pronouncements of governors and journalists did not effect country music performers as much as prejudice on a local level. Dependent on radio shows and schoolhouse personal appearances for their livelihood, many encountered difficulties in getting on the air and securing venues to play. As Bill Bolick explains:

It was almost impossible to get a sponsor through the radio station itself. I suppose it was what they considered a necessary evil; they knew that it was popular with most of their listeners and yet they frowned upon it very much, and, I think, really tried to hold the country musician down as much as they possibly could.

⁸² Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, 324; Tribe, Mountaineer Jamboree, 109; Roy Acuff quoted in Rumble, Roy Acuff, 21; Delmore, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity, 87.

Performers fortunate enough to secure a radio spot next faced the task of convincing school leaders to allow them to use their facilities. The prospect of receiving nearly half of the proceeds from a country music show did not waver many schoolhouse leaders from their cultural and intellectual predilections. Some looked at the other side of the coin and cringed at the thought of where the other profits were going. In Alabama, Tommy Gentry could not persuade a local school official to let his group perform after a Delmore Brother appearance: "The principal said that he would never allow another Hill Billy show to come in and take as much money out of the community as the Delmore Brothers did." Commenting on a movement to ban country music from schools, Cliff Carlisle wrote the Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder encouraging his fellow performers to remain steadfast in their efforts to peddle their musical talent:

Don't worry boys, the hillbilly music is here to stay as long as we have the good old farmer, the miner, the railroader, the mill-worker, the truck-drivers and all the common class of people, which outnumber the so-called dudes one hundred thousand to one. More power to all you hillbillies and cowboys, or whatever you are.⁸³

Carlisle's comments suggest that country music on the eve of World War II had yet to expand beyond its core working-class audience. Most urban and middle-

⁸³ Bolick, "I Always Liked the Type of Music That I Play"; Tommy Gentry, letter, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 1, No. 5 (March 1940): 5-6; Cliff Carlisle, letter, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 1, No. 5 (March 1940): 5.

class inhabitants of the South (and throughout America) still derisively referred to the music as “hillbilly.” Some performers willingly accepted the label as one contrived for marketing purposes. Others like Clayton McMichen, trying to gain respectability for themselves as musicians, balked at the term: “That ‘hillbilly,’ we fought it, teeth and toenails...(because) we wanted to make (country music) popular.” Ernest Tubb similarly viewed the label as counterproductive:

We’d ask people, ‘do you like hillbilly music?’; they’d always be hesitant to admit that they did. Like the word ‘hillbilly’ was an inferior type word, that make it inferior type music...they would hesitate about saying they were familiar with the music—even though they’d come out and see our shows!

When recording executive Ralph Peer unconsciously gave the music its surname in the mid-1920s, the major record companies steered clear of using the derogatory term, as Roy Acuff explains:

They did everything they could to keep people from thinking these were hillbilly records, or even country records. They were listed on the record label an on the paper jackets as ‘Old Time Singing and Playing’ or ‘Novelty Singing and Playing’...we had a ways to go before our type of music was to become respectable.

While the record companies did not encourage the use of the term “hillbilly music,” they continued to keep it segregated well into the forties by issuing country selections on their budget labels (e.g. Bluebird, Okeh). Of the majors, only Decca placed its

name on its country music offerings.⁸⁴

The reasons why country music performers and their record companies tried to distance themselves from the "hillbilly" epithet become apparent in light of the social and intellectual climate of the times. Country music's association with the white, rural South invariably fostered prejudicial opinions of the genre. As Bill Malone explains, "to many people hillbilly music was just one more example, along with Ku Kluxism, Prohibition, sharecropping, racial violence, and religious bigotry, of the South's retarded and degenerate culture." H. L. Mencken captured the mental image many northern intellectuals possessed of the South when he labeled the South "the Sahara of the Bozart," describing the bulk of the region as "a vast plain of mediocrity, stupidity, lethargy, almost of dead silence." Another northern writer in the mid-1920s turidly lambasted the region's inhabitants more directly: "The 'hill-billy' is a North Carolina or Tennessee and adjacent mountaineer type of illiterate white whose creed and allegiance are to the Bible, the chautaugua, and the phonograph." These and other critics of the American South failed to mention the effects that poverty might have on working-class southerners' high-brow pursuits; in their myopic renderings of southern culture, Mencken and others hastily equated distinctiveness with inferiority. With its increased presence on national radio, southern music became an easy target for ridicule. Compared to the popular songs that featured the velvety voice of Bing

⁸⁴ Clayton McMichen quoted in Fred Hoeptner and Bob Pinson, "Clayton McMichen Talking, IV, Old Time Music No. 5 (Spring 1972); 20, 30; Ernest Tubb quoted in John Etheredge, "Ernest Tubb: The Legend," Country Music Vol. 8, No. 8 (May 1980): 31; Acuff, Roy Acuff's Nashville, 115.

Crosby and the sugar-coated lyrical offerings of New York's Tin Pan Alley's songwriters, country music seemed foreign and cacophonous to America's middle class. As the 1930s wore on, however, the climate of opinion became less hostile to the both South in general and country music in particular. In the late thirties, the region went from the nation's most unsightly blemish to its "number one economic problem," with the Washington Brain Trust and southern sociologists both exploring the reasons for the region's deficiencies and offering solutions. Through films and literature, Americans became more intrigued with southern culture (although they were often offered a distorted image of it) and through the photographs of Dorothea Lange and Margaret Bourke-White, they increased their awareness of the poor southerners' plight. With poverty becoming a less abstract phenomenon no longer exclusively associated with the South, Americans suddenly faced with hard times of their own became more receptive to the commonality of the country music message.⁸⁵

Many Americans approached country music obliquely, through folk music that often exhibited few of country's defining characteristics. As early as the postbellum period, Americans developed an interest in white southern folk music, initially through Will Hays' melodies and later through the song-collecting efforts of Cecil Sharp, John Lomax and others in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The old-time

⁸⁵ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 42; H. L. Mencken quoted in James C. Cobb, "Country Music and the 'Southernization' of America," All That Glitters: Country Music in America, ed. George H. Lewis (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1993): 76; unidentified Variety writer quoted in Carr, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," 486; James C. Cobb, "Does Mind No Longer Matter?: The South, the Nation, and The Mind of the South, 1941-1991," Journal of Southern History Vol. 57, No. 4 (November 1991): 685; Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 99.

fiddlers who took part in industrialist Henry Ford's national fiddling contests in the 1910s undoubtedly introduced many other Americans to white southern music, as did the field recordings efforts of John and Alan Lomax and others affiliated with the Library of Congress' Archive of American Folk Song in the 1930s. On radio, listeners could hear Bradley Kincaid singing old English ballads, Woody Guthrie delivering anthems to social consciousness, and Burl Ives offering folk ditties. While many of these artists were not country music performers per se, they did familiarize their audience with many aspects of the genre, namely acoustic instrumentation, realistic lyrical imagery, and old-time melodies. Folklorists and folk performers often drew a distinction between their music (which they viewed as authentic) and country music (which they viewed as commercial). Nevertheless, they acquainted innumerable Americans with the basics of country music, thereby enervating the abomination many of them previously felt toward the genre. Ironically, country music seemed to be attracting more new listeners in the North than in the South. Commenting on country music's early expansion in the 1930s, Alton Delmore observes that "the people in the North accepted country and western music much sooner than the people in the South."⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Bill C. Malone, "Will Hays," Encyclopedia of Southern Culture 1061-1062; Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers, 74; Wolfe, Tennessee Strings, 56, Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 42-43, 56, 128-129; Jones, "Who is Bradley Kincaid?," 126-127; Neil V. Rosenberg, introduction, Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined, ed. Neil V. Rosenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993) 8; David E. Whisnant, All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983) 184; Delmore, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity, 87.

Through folk music, radio expansion, and increased identification among non-southern listeners, country music stood on the brink of nationalization in the pre-war period. As Robert Shelton points out, in less than twenty years "country music evolved from an un-self-conscious folk music into a highly self-conscious entertainment form." On a local scale, in thousands of schoolhouses throughout the Southeast, rural white southerners continued to gather and listen to the performance of local musicians often raised in nearby communities. Countless members of country music acts sustained other means of livelihood and the popularity of many other full-time country music professionals remained local or sub-regional in scope. Even performers who enjoyed a regional or even national following maintained a base of operations on a particular radio station. To all intents and purposes, country music in 1941 represented an entertainment form produced by and for the rural white inhabitants of the American South. Musically, it remained acoustic and primarily derived from traditional source material and lyrically it continued to reflect the nuances of rural southern life.⁸⁷

Whether or not anyone realized it, however, country music was changing, particularly in respect to instrumentation and vocal style. Principally as a result of radio expansion, country music vocalists began to sing softer and more expressively, often creating an emotional bond with listeners. As listeners became more attentive to

⁸⁷ Robert Shelton, The Country Music Story: A Picture History of Country and Western Music (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966) 53; Steve Sholes, interview with Tandy Rice, Nashville, 8 February 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

interpretive styles, vocalists stepped to the forefront of the previously instrumentally-centered genre. Shape-note based harmonies further distinguished the human voice as country music's most popular instrument of the late 1930s, reinvigorating the domestic tradition. Meanwhile, the mandolin and the Dobro displaced the fiddle and banjo in country music bands, redefining the string-band sound. Performers continued to derive material from traditional sources, but many others took to songwriting that incorporated a receptiveness to unconventional musical styles with an affinity for traditional imagery. Radio and records enabled country music performers in the late 1930s to become less provincial in outlook and more interactive in the creative process. Agilely balancing tradition and innovation, country music in the autumn of 1941 stood on the threshold of a period of monumental expansion.

CHAPTER 2—THE GREAT BREAKTHROUGH: WORLD WAR II AND THE NATIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF COUNTRY MUSIC

In the autumn of 1941, country music remained primarily a rural, southern phenomenon. The radio barn dances did a great deal to break the genre of its cultural isolation, but its core audience continued to reside within Dixie's borders. Musically, it continued to cling to its southeastern folk heritage, even as it began to smooth out many of its rough frontier edges. Domestication and radio exposure brought more emphasis on vocals and softer instrumentation, but it did not fundamentally alter country music's basics. In the last month of 1941, country music ostensibly was still music composed by rural white southerners for rural white southerners.

In the years between 1942 and 1945, country music's audience expanded far beyond the southeast quadrant of the United States. During the war, it became a national phenomenon, albeit one that puzzled as many Americans as it attracted. Several factors led to country music's nationalization during World War II, namely: the war itself and the appeal of country music's plaintive lyrics in wartime; the aggressive marketing of country music by music publishers and promoters; a shortage of new popular music that led many Americans to country music's novelty; country music's embracing of popular music instrumentation; the intermingling of country listeners and singers with persons with other musical preferences in the armed forces; the migration of rural southerners to urban areas throughout the country; and the expansion of the jukebox industry.

Wartime population shifts proved to be the most discernible of these trends.

Rural southerners on the move in search of better employment during the war flooded into cities, North and South. Rural southern areas lost 3.3 million people, or twenty percent of their population. Those who chose to remain in the South went to the naval shipyards of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, or interior cities such as Fort Worth, Tulsa, Nashville, Memphis, and Birmingham where aircraft and other types of war plants were located. In the 1940s, the South's metropolitan areas grew at about three times the national average. Between 1940 and 1944, the South's two fastest metropolitan areas, Norfolk/Hampton Roads and Mobile increased their white population by 143,500 and 71,700 respectively. Wartime struck a fatal blow to the South's agricultural nexus, with the number of workers employed in the region's production industries doubling between 1939 and 1943. Historian Francis Abernathy captures the lure of the southern city:

A farmer making a bare living on his eighty acres found out that somebody was paying a dollar an hour in the shipyards, and it didn't take him long to figure out that he could live better in the city—with paved streets, picture shows, and brick schools—than he ever thought about on the farm.¹

¹George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967) 703; Pete Daniel, "Going Among Strangers: Southern Reactions to World War II," Journal of American History Vol. 77, No. 3 (December, 1990): 886, 898; David R. Goldfield, Promised Land: The South Since 1945 (Arlington Heights, H. Davidson, Inc., 1987) 5-8; C. Vann Woodward, The Burden of Southern History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960) 4-6; Jack Temple Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 304-305; Francis Edward Abernathy, "Texas Folk and Modern Country Music," Texas Country: The Changing Rural Scene,

Many southerners found the work easier to come by than the amenities, as the infrastructure of many southern cities failed to keep pace with the influx of migrants.

A Washington Post reporter in 1944 described Mobile as “up to its ears in trouble.”

Another observer captured this image of the Alabama coast in wartime:

Sidewalks are crowded...Garbage cans are overflowing...In cluttered backyards people camp out in tents and chickenhouses and shelters tacked together out of packing cases...Over it all the Gulf mist, heavy with the smoke of soft coal, hangs in streaks, and glittering the training planes (that) endlessly circle above the airfields.

With all its lackluster, however, many southerners welcomed the opportunities that the southern city offered. While many often displayed a reluctance to abandon their rural cultural heritage, many welcomed the prospect of escaping from the economic quagmire that so-often characterized southern agricultural tenancy.²

Opportunities abounded in the North as well, and many southerners tracked to the Snowbelt in search of employment in war plants. Between 1940 and 1944, 42,000 whites from Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi made the journey to Detroit. Countless others from the Mid-South and South Atlantic states migrated to Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and the Washington D.C./Baltimore area. In

eds. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves-Marquardt (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1986) 165.

² Daniel, “Going Among Strangers,” 886, 899-905; Agnes Meyer of the Washington Post and John Dos Passos quoted in Carl Abbott, The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) 110.

northern cities, migrants established a support network among themselves to preserve their cultural heritage and to combat the prejudices of the native population. Owners of cafes and taverns located near defense plants or “hillbilly” enclaves soon discovered it profitable to maintain a stock of country music selections on jukeboxes in their establishments. Osmotically, non-southern patrons acquired a familiarity, and in some cases, an affinity for country music. On Sundays, southern migrants gathered amongst themselves and with the native population at folk music parks or at large travelling tent show sites to hear country music.³

The folk music parks of the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Midwest began appearing sometime in the early thirties as a product of the folk revival of the Depression years and northern migration. As the thirties progressed, professional touring acts supplanted local amateur musicians as the main attraction on the large, outdoor stages within these parks. Recognizing the economic potential of providing outdoor entertainment for urbanites, several independent promoters in the late thirties and early forties began to organize traveling shows based on the folk music park motif. John Lair often took his Renfro Valley show on the road during the touring

³ Robert G. Spinney, “World War II and Nashville, Tennessee, 1938-1951: Social Changes and Public Sector Expansion,” diss., Vanderbilt University, 1995, 39; Daniel, “Going Among Strangers,” 898; Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, 317; Bill C. Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 182; “Hillbillies Rolling in Coin and What They Want Most are More Pumping Pianos,” Variety Vol. No. (10 March 1943): 1; “Band Buyers Eye Territory Faves: Folk Artists Big,” The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 1 (2 January 1943): 27; “Hillbilly Tunes Are Tops in Baltimore War Plant Section,” The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 23 (5 June 1943): 62; “Hillbilly Disks Hit New Mid-West High,” The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 31 (31 July 1943): 16.

season. His troupe remained very popular in the border states throughout the war, averaging \$5,000 a week in profits playing mainly small towns in 1944. Out west, Foreman Phillips emerged as a major figure on the California scene, booking such notable country music acts as Roy Acuff and Bob Wills at his refurbished Venice Pier Ballroom. In June of 1942, he inaugurated the Los Angeles County Barn Dance, designed to entertain the multitude of transplanted southerners employed in the war industries in southern California. Enormously popular, Phillips' dances became the focal point of the Los Angeles country music scene in the mid-late 1940s. Other successful independent promoters of the period include Oscar Davis, Hal Burns, Connie B. Gay, Larry Sunbrock, and Gus Foster. Foster introduced many southeastern performers (most notably the Callahan Brothers) to audiences in the Southwest, while Burns and Davis were instrumental in bringing country music to the nation at large. A February 1943 package show organized by Frank at Cincinnati's Music Hall featuring Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, the Carter Family, and Bill Boyd drew 13,000 in one day. The Burns and Davis shows attracted large crowds in the South as well, in dozens of war boom cities. Roy Acuff explains a contributing factor to the success of the independent promoters throughout the nation: "There were scores of farm boys who had moved to the city to work in industrial plants and in the textile mills and on the railroads, and any contact they could have with the country was important to them. Country music was this contact."⁴

⁴ Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 186; Nat Green, "Fantastic Grosses With Folkshows," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book (New York: Billboard Publishing Co., Inc, 144) 345; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 42 (16

The war itself facilitated the promotion of country music tours, many designed to entertain at training camps and military installations throughout the nation. Western swing performer Bill Boyd teamed with Hal Davis in late 1942 and early 1943 for an extensive tour of southern camps. Late in 1943, Boyd headed a war-bond buying tour of the West Coast. Touring constantly throughout the war, Boyd directly introduced country music to thousands of military personnel stationed in the United States.

Another important wartime touring troupe, the Grand Ole Opry's "Camel Caravan," spent nineteen months in 1941 and 1942 on the road entertaining troops (as well as promoting country music and cigarettes) throughout the United States and in Panama. The brainchild of J. L. Frank, the Caravan perfectly amalgamated good will with marketing strategy to the benefit of all involved.⁵

As a business, country music promotion was less motivated by humanitarian impulse than by economic gain, and over the course of the war it became big business.

October 1943): 65; James B. Hamilton, "West of the Mississippi," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder ns 1 (September, 1944): 19; Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night": A History of Louisiana Country Music diss., Tulane University, 1995. (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 395; Nat S. Green, "King Korn Klondike," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 10 (6 March 1943): 7; "American Folk Records," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 8 (20 February 1943): 65; Ronnie F. Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 78-79; Bill C. Malone, "Country Music in the Depression Southwest," The Depression in the Southwest, ed. Donald W. Whisenhunt (Port Washington: Kennikat Press Co., 1989) 62; Roy Acuff and William Neely, Roy Acuff's Nashville: The Life and Good Times of Country Music (New York: Putnam, 1983) 120-121.

⁵ Floy Case, "Down Blue Bonnet Way," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 3, No. 4 (March 1943): 1; "American Folk Tunes and Tunesters," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 39 (25 September 1943): 68; Otto Kitsinger, Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 12.

Together with the booking agencies of high-wattage stations like WLS and WSM, the promoters revolutionized the nature of the country music personal appearance tour.

WLS' Dick Bergen established the precedent of teaming a group of a station's acts for large venues when he booked several National Barn Dance performers for a theatre show in the fall of 1932. Four shows in one day grossed over \$2,000, leading to the establishment of the WLS Artists' Bureau. By the 1940s, WLS' tour of fairs (then under the direction of George Ferguson and Earl Kurtze) were consistently drawing capacity audiences. The agents of stations with a large reservoir of country talent had little difficulty booking fairs throughout the war years. Bill McCluskey, manager of WLW Promotions, Inc., explained the lucrative situation to a reporter in 1943:

We have consistently broken all records in all the spots we have played on one-day stands in theatres... We never consider the size of a town. All we are interested in is the size of the auditorium because we know we can bring the people in from the surrounding towns.

Established in 1934 under the principal direction of Harry Stone, the WSM Artists' Service Bureau provided Opry members with a more secure income than the personal appearance tours and consequently attracted many upcoming stars. While the Opry itself paid its performers a minimal salary, the profits earned from the Artists' Service Bureau's tours and the reputation gained by appearing on the Opry furnished its members with financial stability.⁶

⁶ Green, "King Korn Klondike," 8-9; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 27 (1 July 1944): 66; Bill McCluskey quoted in Green, "King Korn Klondike," 9;

Many performers sought spots in promoter/artist service bureau-assembled package shows as a means to continue touring in a wartime atmosphere of gas and tire rationing. Country bands not broken up by the enlistment of its members into armed services found themselves without the means to travel the long distances for their personal appearances. As Alton Delmore explains, "the government announced they were going to ration automobile tires and gas and that was it." Some, like the Carlisle Brothers, quit the business entirely to work in war plants. Country music acts dependent on records for supplemental income or as a means of enhancing their reputations for personal appearance tours faced the impediment of shellac rationing which curtailed their releases. In April 1942, the War Production Board restricted the non-military use of the material to pre-war levels; by autumn, releases of new country music recordings slumped to a mere trickle. Less established acts fell victim to Darwinistic recording and releasing policies. Producer Art Satherley found his efforts to release the products of many of his recording sessions circumscribed by the government order: "From my enormous catalog of records...I was only allowed to put out a few, such as Gene Autry, Bob Wills, and Roy Acuff." While shellac rationing hamstrung many performers and producers, it actually helped to increase the popularity of the genre beyond its core audience. With popular music releases restricted as well, many jukebox customers turned to country music as an alternative

to repetitive plays of familiar tunes. Many found this music pleasing and continued to make country music selections after the lifting of the shellac restriction in 1944.⁷

Coin-operated phonographs first appeared in the late 1800s, with the first disc-equipped versions invented in the early part of the twentieth century. Wurlitzer began marketing multi-selection jukeboxes in the late 1920s, but sales remained slow until the repeal of Prohibition. Many of the 100,000 taverns that opened after the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment that could not afford live entertainment provided their customers with coin-operated phonographs instead. By 1940, the nation's 300,000 jukeboxes were bringing in over ninety million dollars annually and accounting for approximately half of all records sold in the United States. During the war, the popularity of the devices skyrocketed, largely due to their presence in restaurants, taverns, and army PXs. While jukeboxes appeared in a variety of locations, many Americans associated them with rough barrooms. Hoping to curtail the trend toward violence in bars, the state of Alabama passed a law in 1943 banning coin-operated

⁷ Bill and Cliff Carlisle, interview with Bill Williams, Nashville, 18 September 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Alton Delmore, Truth is Stranger Than Publicity (Nashville: Country Music Federation Press, 1995) 269; Bill Callahan, interview with Ronnie Pugh and David Hayes, Dallas, 4 January 1979, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Roland Gelatt, The Fabulous Phonograph, 2nd Rev. ed. (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co, 1955) 276-277; Russell Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven: The American Popular Music Business in the Twentieth Century (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996) 216; Kevin Coffey, Cliff Bruner and His Texas Wanderers (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1997) 31; Art Satherley, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hollywood, 27 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Harold Humphrey, "Talent and Tunes on Music Machines," The Billboard Vol. 53, No. 14 (5 April 1941): 72; "More Shellac For Records," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 3 (15 January 1944): 63; "Folk Music Here to Stay in Jukes," The Billboard Vol. 57, No. 9 (3 March 1945): 92-93.

music machines from public places that sold liquor. Southern migrants in the North congregating in "hillbilly taverns" located near defense plants looked to jukeboxes to hear the songs that local radio stations virtually ignored. Not surprisingly, fifty percent of all Detroit locations equipped with a jukebox in 1944 reported the inclusion of country music selections on their machines; in St. Louis, the number rose to seventy percent. Even in a city as openly hostile to country music as New York, three in ten operators reported "folk" music on their jukes. The popularity of country music on the city's jukeboxes eventually led to the inauguration of a New York-based barn dance. Emceed by Layman Cameron, the show generated considerable interest among transplanted southerners and native New Yorkers alike. In addition to indicating the breadth of wartime migration, the popularity of country music in the North and on jukeboxes across the nation confirmed to many observers that popular music was not fulfilling the musical appetites of a significant portion of Americans. Ironically, the songwriters of Tin Pan Alley gave the country music industry a push when they invoked a strike in the spring of 1942.⁸

⁸ "65 Years of Juke Box Growth," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 21 (23 May 1953): 53; John Morthland, "Jukebox Fever," Country Music Vol. 6, No. 8 (May 1978) 35; Richard Spottswood, "Country Music and the Phonograph," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 21, No. 8 (February 1987): 20; Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 55; "Open Alabama Taverns to Jukes: Lift 5-Year Ban on Music," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 48 (29 November 1947): 156; Wanda Marvin, "Hillbillies Win in New York," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 30 (22 July 1944): 11, 16, 64-65; "Folk Music Takes Hold in the Jukes," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book, 343; Joli Jensen, The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization, and Country Music (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998) 42.

Prior to World War II, Tin Pan Alley remained the primary source for American popular music. The music publishing houses in New York City known as Tin Pan Alley reigned over American music for the first quarter of the twentieth century. Sheet music sales determined the success of a song, with tunes popularized via vaudeville, Hollywood films, Broadway musicals, and traveling entertainment shows. Formed in 1914 to protect the copyrights of songwriters, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) fought a series of battles in the teens and twenties in an effort to establish itself and legitimize its purpose. Two attempts to combat ASCAP's increasing monopoly of the music industry (the first by the film industry in the early twenties, the second by the radio in the early thirties) eventually failed. Radio, however, proved a formidable foe, and ASCAP's efforts to secure licensing fees from broadcasters met with increasing hostility as the 1930s progressed. Broadcasts began paying fees to ASCAP as early as 1922, but when rates began to reach exorbitant levels in the mid-thirties due to radio's increased popularity, the National Association of Broadcasters (N.A.B.) moved to organize the radio industry. In 1939, when ASCAP proposed doubling the fees charged to broadcasters for the use of their copyrighted material on the air, the N.A.B. responded by forming a rival publishing company, Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI) on October 14, 1939. After the expiration of their contract with ASCAP on December 31, 1940, the broadcasters turned to non-ASCAP sources for music to play on the air. With nearly all Tin Pan Alley songwriters in ASCAP, BMI opened its doors to writers the likes of which included those virtually excluded from ASCAP's ranks, including those in the

country music field. Consequently, many country music songwriters, like Floyd Tillman, never took their profession seriously: "I just did it for my own amusement. I never heard of anyone in Texas writing songs. I always thought they all came out of New York, which most of them did." Art Satherley explains ASCAP's blanket prejudice toward southerners that fostered such exclusion: "The head people at ASCAP at the time thought that they should get all their songs from someone in New York or Philadelphia or Pittsburgh or any metropolitan area...They didn't think there was anything south of Newark." ASCAP seemed confident that most Americans shared their views, but the public outcry for the return of popular songs on radio that ASCAP banked on never materialized and by the fall of 1941, ASCAP acquiesced to the broadcasters. In the interim of the dispute, however, BMI secured over 36,000 copyrights, many from country music songwriters. As one of the prime beneficiaries of the dispute, the country music industry gained recognition among radio listeners and the previously inimical publishing houses. Roy Acuff and Fred Rose furthered the country music cause considerably when they joined BMI in 1942. The ASCAP-BMI dispute and its aftermath effectively legitimized country music songwriters while opening the ears of millions of Americans to their products.⁹

⁹ Jensen, Nashville Sound, 43-44; Charlie Gillett, The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll (New York: Dell Pub. Co., 1970) 10; "What Is ASCAP," Variety Vol. 138, No. 4 (3 April 1940): 26; "What is BMI," ibid., pg. 27; Llewellyn White, The American Radio: A Report on the Broadcasting Industry in the United States (New York: Arno Press, 1971) 51; Hazel Meyer, The Gold In Tin Pan Alley (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958) 89-96; Floyd Tillman, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 13 October 1986, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Art Satherley, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville,

On the heels of the ASCAP-BMI conflict, another major dispute in the music industry offered additional exposure for country music. Seeking to gain a share of the profits from the booming jukebox and radio industries, the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and its 140,000 members went on strike in August 1943 at the behest of their spokesman, James Petrillo. Withstanding threats from the War Labor Board and the pleas of President Roosevelt, the AFM eventually succeeded in securing greater compensation for the airplay and public performance of songs produced by its members, with Decca capitulating in September of 1943 and the last major label following suit later the next year. During the strike, Americans gradually turned to alternative music in the absence of new releases. Radio stations that regularly played popular music recordings soon found themselves seeking out country music discs. Louis R. Cook, an employee of a Fort Worth radio station during the ban, explains how the dearth of new pop material led to the airplay of country songs:

I was asked by the station's general manager to go with him to a station just outside Fort Worth that was going out of business... to buy the station's record library. Being a rural station, it had a much larger collection of 'old familiar' recordings than we did at KFJZ. We were very glad to get these records as they (relieved) the monotony of our having to play what few popular recordings we had on hand... The letters we received about these old songs

prompted us to continue a program of old-time folk music after the recording ban was lifted.

While country music performers participated in the strike, many of the independent labels they recorded for reconciled with Petrillo sooner than the majors. Whether through the discovery of pre-war recordings or the newer selections released by the independents, Americans gained further familiarity with country music during the Petrillo ban.¹⁰

While the music industry wrangled over the distribution of profits, changes in popular music itself facilitated country music's growth in the war years. While big bands dominated the pre-war years, vocalists stepped into the limelight in the early 1940s. As Martin A. Laforse and James A. Drake points out, "to young couples separated by the war, vocal music seemed more personal than the music of a large orchestra or dance band." The modern ballad style (a.k.a. crooning) popularized by Bing Crosby in the 1930s flourished during the war, evidenced most noticeably in the rise of Frank Sinatra. The interest in sentimental and novelty songs during wartime nourished the ascendance of the popular vocalists, with audiences responding favorably to their interpretations of songs like "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," "Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree," "I'll Be Seeing You," and "As Time Goes By." By latching on to this trend, several country music singers rose to levels of prominence during the war that rivaled, and in some cases, exceeded their

¹⁰ White, The American Radio, 51; Gelatt, The Fabulous Phonograph, 278-280, 326; Louis R. Cook quoted in Renfro Cole Norris, "The Ballad on the Air," MA thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1951, 27.

popular counterparts. The success of three vocalists from Texas (Gene Autry, Tex Ritter, and Al Dexter) demonstrates the appeal of the country-pop blend.¹¹

No singer more skillfully blended the country and pop music idioms during the war years than Gene Autry. Combining a pop vocalist's polish with his own unique subtlety, Autry literally redefined country singing, paving the way for dozens of other performers who more fully embraced pop stylings. Musically, Gene Autry's recordings of the war years similarly coalesced mainstream and regional instrumentation, delicately balancing steel guitar and fiddle with horns and strings. Lyrically, he sidestepped country music's southernness by concentrating on western imagery early in his career and topical and universal themes as the war progressed. Through his appearances in singing cowboy movies and his aggregation of various American musical forms, Autry did more than any other single performer to nationalize the appeal of country music by veiling it in western vestiges.¹²

Whether or not one can categorize Gene Autry's recordings as country music remains open to debate. Only Frankie Marvin's inconspicuous steel guitar lends any country flavor to them musically. A wall of sound composed of trumpets, clarinets, violins, accordions, and castanets swirl around Autry's unruffled vocals. The formula of combining pop-flavored, infectious melodies with rustic imagery initially

¹¹ Gillett, The Sound of the City, 11-12; Martin W. Laforse and James A. Drake, Popular Culture and American Life: Selected Topics in the Study of American Popular Culture (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981) 54; Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven, 251-252.

¹² Douglas B. Green, "Gene Autry," Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez, ed. Bill C. Malone (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975) 152-154.

established on Autry's recordings of the mid-thirties (after he abandoned a Jimmie Rodgers-style approach) remained remarkably buoyant well into the 1940s, with "Don't Fence Me In" (released in 1945) representing the apogee of the Autry sound. The aggregation of Cole Porter's western lyrics, Autry's breezy voice, and Art Satherley's sweeping production resulted in one of the greatest moments in American music. The pop-tinged vocals added to country songs like "It Makes No Difference Now" and the Academy Award-nominated "Be Honest With Me" softened the edges of the wistful lyrics just enough to attract thousands of Americans to southern-derived music. Douglas B. Green describes the appeal of Autry's vocal approach: "His voice expressed a sincerity and unaffected honesty which created a feeling of immediacy between the singer and his listeners." When applied to lyrics centering on the effects of wartime separation (e.g. "At Mail Call Today," "I'll Be Back"), Autry's voice encapsulated the apprehensions of a nation at war. Gene Autry was less a country music figure than a symbol of Americana. His association with country music during the war years (established through song selection, diction, and use of rural imagery) helped to establish the genre as an authentic national phenomenon.¹³

Ironically, Gene Autry, a singer so often identified as a country musician or western singer, fits the standard definition of neither. As noted above, his recordings offered only token allegiance to country music instrumentation; his singing,

¹³ Green, "Gene Autry," 146; Jonathan Guyot Smith, "The Brilliant Artistry of Gene Autry," *Movie Collector's World* No. 438 (14 January 1994): 67; Larry Willoughby, *Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme: A Pictorial History of Texas Music* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1984) 28.

meanwhile, bore little if any resemblance to frontier vocal styles. Early western recordings offered listeners unadorned self-accompanied vocal presentations of narratives devoid of the romantic elements that characterized most twentieth century cowboy songs. The music and film industries adroitly supplanted the authentic cowboys' penchant for singing about their work and the unnerving solitude they faced with less austere imagery. For every performer like Gene Autry who convincingly played the cowboy role, however, there were a dozen others who look absurd singing cowboy songs. One successful country singer of the 1940s, however, managed to bridge the gap between frontier authenticity and Tin Pan Alley romanticism more successfully than any other. While by no means a real cowboy, Tex Ritter helped to reinvigorate interest in authentic cowboy songs when he brought his impressive apprehension of the lost genre to New York in 1936.¹⁴

Attending the University of Texas, Ritter developed his interest in the music of the American West while studying under J. Frank Dobie and John Lomax, two noted folklorists. After a stint with a traveling musical troupe, he journeyed to New York City, where he became quite popular in the mid-thirties on radio and among folk culture enthusiasts. At his first recording session (with Decca in 1935), he sang four cowboy songs, accompanied only by his guitar, including "Rye Whiskey," a song he reworked several times over the course of his career. In 1936, he left New York for

¹⁴ Douglas B. Green, "The Sons of the Pioneers," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 53; Thomas F. Johnson, "That Ain't Country: The Distinctiveness of Commercial Western Music," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 17, No. 62 (Summer 1981): 75, 78; Abernathy, "Texas Folk and Modern Country Music," 145.

Hollywood, where he began appearing in several western movies. Dropped by Decca in 1939, he signed with Johnny Mercer's new Los Angeles-based Capitol label in 1942.¹⁵

Backed by such country music notables as Johnny Bond, Wesley Tuttle, Merle Travis, and Cliffie Stone, Ritter's Capitol recordings during World War II differed considerably from his first solo performances. While his early Decca releases owed a great deal to the authentic cowboy tradition, the Capitol sides represent the epitome of the western and country blend. Less pop-flavored than Autry's releases, Ritter's recordings placed more emphasis on fiddle and guitar soloing. As producer of the sides, Johnny Mercer brought his background in popular music to the first session, adding background vocals and accordion to the country-band backing of "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle." Occasionally, he would add a clarinet or strings to the rubric. Ritter's deep, weathered voice, however, squarely places these recordings in the country music fold, as does the straightforwardness of the lyrics written by Jenny Lou Carson, Scotty Wiseman, and Ritter himself. By war's end, Ritter was well-established as one of country music's most identifiable and successful performers.

As the third member of the Texas triumvirate that brought country music to Americans through the incorporation of pop sounds, Al Dexter gained national notoriety during the war on the strength of only one song. Many musicologists

¹⁵ Willoughby, Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme, 29-30; Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 151, Johnny Bond, The Tex Ritter Story (New York: Chappell Music Co., 1976) 20-49; Tex Ritter, spoken introduction to "Rye Whiskey," Tex Ritter: An American Legend, Capitol LP SKC-11241, 1973; Douglas B. Green, "The Singing Cowboy: An American Dream," Journal of Country Music Vol. 7, No. 2 (May 1978): 27.

consider Dexter a honky-tonker because of his infamous use of barroom imagery, but it seems more appropriate to describe him as a novelty singer-songwriter with an incomparable talent for putting gleeful lyrics to catchy tunes. Possessing neither the voice of the pop crooner nor the charisma of the singing cowboys, Dexter momentarily surpassed all his competitors in his ephemeral rise to fame when "Pistol Packin' Mama" burst on the American scene in 1943.

The sharecropper's son turned housepainter from Jacksonville, Texas made his first recordings in 1936 under the direction of Art Satherley. From the outset, Satherley let Dexter know that he was looking for something different, and strongly suggested to the singer that he abandon his penchant for writing gospel and Jimmie Rodgers-like songs in favor of more up-tempo material:

Art Satherley...told me to write honky-tonk songs. When I told him I like pretty songs, he said...'My lad, do you want to sing pretty songs or do you want to make money.' I wrote "Honky Tonk Blues" and "Jelly Roll Blues" and after that, all they wanted from me was honky-tonk.

In the context of the 1930s, "honky-tonk" meant material suitable for dancing, and Dexter proved himself up to the challenge. Using his experiences as a tavern owner during the Texas oil boom, Dexter wrote a series of jazzy tunes depicting life in the Southwestern honky-tonks. "Car-Hoppin' Mama," "Honky-Tonk Baby," "Bar Hotel" all make light of inebriate excess. By 1940, with the formula well in place, he recorded "When We Go Honky Tonkin'" backed by a fiddle, electric steel guitar, amplified mandola, and acoustic rhythm guitar. Around 1942, Satherley added an

accordion and trumpet (played by Harry Holinger) to the mix to create a unique sound that historian Nick Tosches describes as “an alembic in which bubbled the forces of old-timey blues, western swing, honky tonk, and outright pop.” On “Pistol Packin’ Mama,” Satherley and Dexter perfected the jaunty sound, with the record selling one million copies in the first six months after its release.¹⁶

The AFM ban (which left the American public hungry for new material) was one contributing factor to the success of “Pistol Packin’ Mama”; Art Satherley points out another: “When we made ‘Pistol Packin’ Mama’ with Al Dexter, we had war hysteria, and it was what people of the time wanted.” Undeniably infectious, the song blared from jukeboxes coast to coast. With pressings limited by shellac shortages, black market discs of the song sold for as much as \$1.25 each. Commenting on the sensation, puzzled editors of Life magazine described the song as “naïve, folksy, and almost completely devoid of meaning (with) a melodic line (that) is simple and (a) lyric rowdy, and, of course, monotonously tautological.” With the recording ban on, Dexter’s version cornered the market, and, in the process, generated a national interest in country music. Billboard conceded that its success proved that “corn can thrive in any part of the country.” In late 1943, Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters recorded it at the first Decca recording session after the AFM ban, but by then, as Dexter explains, his version had already well-established itself: “See, my record was out

¹⁶ Al Dexter quoted in John W. Moody, “Wine, Women and Song,” Denton-Record Chronicle 27 June 1980; Bill C. Malone, The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1981) 36; Nick Tosches, “Al Dexter,” Old Time Music No. 22 (Autumn 1976): 4.

about a year before Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters could record it. All the recording companies were on strike with the musicians union, so my record got the go on 'em." On the coattails of "Pistol Packin' Mama," Dexter went on to dominate the country music charts in 1944, scoring four of the year's ten biggest hits. In most of their post-"Pistol Packin' Mama" efforts, Dexter and Satherley implemented the same formula, in some cases, updating previous fiddle-and amplified mandola-dominated selections like "Calico Rag" and "Wine, Women, and Song" with trumpet, accordion, and clarinet backing, with considerable commercial success. Al Dexter's success proved that country music could compete with popular music for the nation's attention and while the playing field at the time was not exactly level (due to the AFM ban), country music's proponents could still point to "Pistol Packin' Mama" as partial proof that the genre would remain neither sectionalized nor marginalized for much longer.¹⁷

"Pistol Packin' Mama" was neither the first country music song to sell nationwide nor the first country music song covered by popular artists like Bing Crosby. In its ubiquity, however, it proved the most publicized. Other contemporary artists like Bob Wills and Elton Britt set precedents for national sales in the early 1940s. Britt's "There's a Star-Spangled Banner Hanging Somewhere" swept the country in 1942 and surpassed the million seller mark in April 1943. Wills' "New San

¹⁷ Art Satherley, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hollywood, 27 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; "'Pistol Packin' Mama,' Hillbilly Tune, Likewise Clicks in Class Cafes," *Variety* Vol. 151 No. 11 (25 August 1943): 1; "'Pistol in Black Market Demand,'" *Variety*, Vol. 152, No. 1 (13 September 1943): 45; "'Pistol Packin' Mama,'" *The Billboard* Vol. 15, No. 11 (11 October 1943): 43; Dexter's chart success calculated using information in Joel Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits* (New York: Billboard Books, 1996).

Antonio Rose,” nearly devoid of all country trappings, reached number eleven on Billboard’s national sales chart in 1940, with Crosby’s version reaching number seven. Crosby went on to record several popular country songs like “You Are My Sunshine,” “Walking the Floor Over You,” and “I’m Thinking Tonight of Blue Eyes” during the war with orchestral backings. The accompaniment of his brother Bob Crosby’s Bob Cats on “Walking the Floor” transforms the song into a jazzy, up-tempo rollick, complete with a heavy beat and tenor saxophone backing. Crosby’s crossover versions drew even more attention to country music, especially in the music industry. In July 1943, Billboard’s country music column (“American Folk Tunes and Tunesters”) became a weekly feature, and by early 1944, the genre had its own weekly chart (“Most Played Juke Box Folk Records”).¹⁸

Country music’s inherent perspicuity contributed a great deal to the genre’s wartime expansion. As music historian Ian Whitcomb points out, “in wartime you get down to fundamentals and hillbilly kept it all close to the earth.” Country songs dealing (both directly and indirectly) with the impact of soldiers’ separation from their wives and sweethearts (e.g. “Each Night at Nine,” “Have I Stayed Away Too Long,” “At Mail Call Today”) captured the war-torn emotions of millions of Americans.

¹⁸ Rich Kienzle, liner notes, Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys Anthology, 1935-1973, Rhino CD R2 70744, 1991; “Inside Stuff—Music,” Variety Vol. 150, No. 17 (28 April 1943): 48; M. H. Orodener, “On the Records,” The Billboard Vol. 53, No. 34 (21 August 1941): 13; M. H. Orodener, “On the Records,” The Billboard Vol. 54, No. 29 (18 July 1942): 22; “Hillbilly Record Reviews,” The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 32 (7 August 1942): 66; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 61.

Country musician/songwriter Ted Daffan explains the appeal of a song like “No Letter Today”:

This was because during the war, World War II, so many people were separated and even civilians, a lot of the men would go elsewhere to look for work or to work in war plants and housing would not be available for awhile, so everybody was looking for a letter and so I had a million seller.¹⁹

Country music songwriters also proved themselves capable of writing lyrics that directly dealt with wartime separation and mortality. With wartime fatalities taking an average of around one percent of the adult population of most states in just the first two years of the conflict, songs like Ernest Tubb’s “Soldier’s Last Letter” and Tex Ritter’s “Gold Star in the Window” appealed to thousands of Americans. Stephen Tucker describes country music during the war as “an emotional salve (with) honest lyrics and simple melodies (that) appealed to men and women who had come face to face with the fact of their own mortality.” Countless other Americans responded to the rousing patriotic message in tunes like “Smoke on the Water,” “Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima,” and “Remember Pearl Harbor.” In October 1942, Billboard noted that “the folk field, far more than the pop field, has come through with war tunes of the type asked for by government officials.” Answering the call, southern songwriters steadily provided the American populace with lyrical pieces that crystallized the

¹⁹ “Gold in Them Thar Hillbillies,” The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 34 (21 August 1943): 12; Ian Whitcomb, After the Ball: Pop Music From Rag to Rock (London: Penguin Press, 1974) 198; Ted Daffan, interview with Garna Christian, Houston, 24 October 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

national wartime zeal. Through its ultra-nationalism and its ability to encapsulate the emotions of war, country music drew in millions of American listeners to its rapidly expanding audience.²⁰

While country music served as a soundtrack for a nation at war, it also became an instrument for politics. Latching on to its grass-roots appeal, many politicians soon discovered its electoral appeal, especially in the South. Former mill owner turned radio personality Wilbert Lee O'Daniel successfully won the governorship of Texas in 1938 touring with a campaign band called "The Hillbilly Boys." O'Daniel's radio program with the band furthered his cause, as evidenced partially by the fact that he won a plurality of the vote in every county within range of its broadcast. In 1941, he organized another band during a special election for a vacant U.S. Senate seat, beating Lyndon Baines Johnson by 1,300 votes. In September 1941, Billboard featured a story on the connection between country music and politics in Texas, which included a survey of Texans' musical preferences. While country music ranked third among various musical genres as Texans' favorite, at least fifty percent of those polled maintained that they at least occasionally liked to listen to country music. Not surprisingly, the percentage of farmers who went so far as to say they "liked" country

²⁰ Janet Schaefer and Marjorie Allen, "Class and Regional Selection in Fatal Casualties of the First 18-24 Months of World War II," Social Forces Vol. 23, No. 2 (December 1944): 167-169; Stephen R. Tucker, "The Western Image In Country Music," MA thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1976, 78-80; "American Folk Records," The Billboard Vol. 54, No. 40 (3 October 1942): 70; Tindall, Emergence of the New South, 688; Jennie A. Chinn, "'There's A Star-Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere': Country-Western Songs of World War II," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 16, No. 58 (Summer 1980): 80.

music was twice that of large city dwellers. However, one-third of the latter group maintained at least an occasional attraction to the music. By no means confined to Texas, country music's appeal served as a public relations medium in both the North and other parts of the South. In Arkansas, Colonel T. H. Barton enlisted the help of Grand Ole Opry performers Jamup and Honey in his 1944 United States senatorial campaign. Also that year, Governor Green of Illinois featured WLS' Patsy Montana at a campaign rally in Chicago. By the end of the war, many politicians clearly viewed an association with country music with less hostility than they did in the late 1930s.²¹

Americans doubting country music's electoral pulling power (especially in the South) need only look to Jimmie Davis' successful bid for the governorship of Louisiana in 1944 for proof of the political development. Davis was not the first southern politician who performed the music of the southern folk as a means to catapulting himself into office; Tennessee's Bob Taylor and Georgia's Tom Watson represent but two who used their fiddle playing skills for political purposes in the late 1800s. Davis, however, represents the first commercial country music performer to win a position as notable as a state governorship. Davis began a career in public service in 1930, when he became a criminal court clerk in Shreveport. In 1938, he made a successful bid for the city's Commissioner of Public Safety. In the absence of

²¹ Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, Border Radio (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987) 115-142; "Hillbilly Music is Step to Political Success in Texas," The Billboard Vol. 53, No. 38 (20 September 1941): 66; "Another Senator-to-Be Uses Hillbilly Troupe to Campaign," The Billboard Vol 56, No. 28 (8 July 1944): 6; Nat Green, "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 45 (4 November 1944): 66.

an attractive reform-minded candidate, the anti-Huey Long forces convinced Davis to run for the office of governor, with the singer formally announcing his decision in the autumn of 1943. Initially hesitant to sing at his rallies, Davis soon formed a band consisting of such country music notables as Moon Mullican and Johnny Gimble to accompany him on the campaign after potential voters began accusing him of haughtiness. Davis' political adroitness and musical talents proved an unbeatable combination, with the singer eventually winning the election by 37,000 votes. Davis' victory made him a national celebrity and no doubt influenced the Democratic National Committee's decision to invite him to sing at their Chicago convention in 1944.²²

Other country music notables tossed their hats into the political ring as well during and after the war. Roy Acuff began flirting with the idea in early 1944, going so far as to announce his decision to run for the Tennessee governorship before taking himself out of the race several weeks later. In 1948, he made a more determined run at the office, touring with his band on the campaign trail but eventually losing the election. In 1951, the Prohibition Party nominated country music singer/songwriter

²² Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 18; Charles K. Wolfe, Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977) 22; "Hillbilly Song in Louisiana Free-For-All Governor Race," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 40 (2 October 1943): 1; Jimmie Davis, interview with Ronnie F. Pugh, Nashville, 10 October 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Johnny Gimble, interview with Rick Balsom, n.p, c. 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Ronnie F. Pugh, liner notes, Jimmie Davis, MCA CD MCAD-10087, 1991; Gus Weill, You Are My Sunshine: The Jimmie Davis Story (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1987) 77-84; Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night", 144, 166, 173-180.

Stuart Hamblen for President, with similar results. Davis, on the other hand, ran another successful campaign for Louisiana governor in 1960. Prior to World War II, such political notions seemed inconceivable given country music's backwards image. Largely due to Jimmie Davis' dignified manner and electoral success, however, country music (and its performers) increasingly became less a target for disparagement among political leaders and the press.²³

Jimmie Davis' triumph and the general utilization of country music for political purposes drew a great deal of media attention to the genre. Meanwhile, on a more grass-roots level, the intermingling of servicemen from various parts of the country brought countless Americans in touch with white southern music for the first time. In a 1968 interview, producer Steve Sholes referred to the population shifts of military personnel and production workers during World War II as "the biggest single factor" in the growth of country music. At PXs around the country, servicemen swapped stories of the youth and their homes. Clarence Merson, stationed in Texas, recalls the cultural exchanges in a letter to his family back in Pennsylvania: "And so on into the night, these countless remembrances of things past. The whole intricate fabric of their lives is rewoven simply, sometimes naively and always without restraint." Many soldiers turned to the PX jukeboxes often filled with country music selections as a

²³ Elizabeth Schlappi, Roy Acuff, the Smoky Mountain Boy (Gretna: Pelican Pub. Co., 1978) 184-196; "Acuff Quits Guv Race, Tension Off," Variety Vol. 153, No. 10 (16 February 1943): 3; "Hamblen Runs Hot and Dry," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 47 (24 November 1951): 1; Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country and Western Music, 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984) 170-171.

source of inexpensive entertainment. Others stationed in the South heard daily local hillbilly radio programs and, on Saturday night, the barn dances. Jack Stapp recalls the popularity of the Saturday night Opry at Fort Jackson, South Carolina: "I'd walk around the camp and no matter where I went I'd never leave the Opry. The Opry was on every radio in every barracks, and there wasn't any way these kids from New York and New Jersey could get away from it...It had to rub off on 'em." Jim McReynolds (of Jim and Jesse) recalls several nights when soldiers squabbled over station selection on the lone radio in his company's barracks. In the absence of a radio, many soldiers sang country songs to the accompaniment of their own guitars, often to the chagrin of their northern counterparts who overwhelmingly preferred the music of bands like Harry James and Tommy Dorsey and the voices of Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra over popular country singers and players. In Texas, makeshift country bands introduced military bases to two-steps that acquired the name "kicker dances." A correspondent from Philadelphia wrote an article on one Tennessee soldier who entertained a group of servicemen on their journey overseas, only to lose his life in combat a few months later. Countless other semi-professional country musicians took to performing as well. Veteran performer Jack Penkola recalled his impromptu shows in the South Pacific:

In my fourteen years of constant traveling I've played every state...played the best theaters and the worst; now with the camp shows I've seen things that will live with me forever. Shows may be held in a mess hall or even under a

tree. One day one was held in a graveyard, another in a church and once on a ship.²⁴

Dozens of country music notables served during the war, with the amount of time they spent playing music varying considerably: Johnny Gimble recalls that he "didn't get to play a lick during the war;" Hank Thompson picked guitar in the barracks and occasionally on the Armed Forces Network (AFN); Leon McAuliffe formed his own band while serving in the Navy; and Ferlin Husky entertained his merchant marine shipmates with songs he had played at informal gatherings in his youth. As Husky remembers, "some of the most enthusiastic people were those who came from parts of the country where this kind of music was almost unknown." Musicians serving stateside (such as Floyd Tillman) found time to perform at local nightclubs and to make recordings during leaves and furloughs. While stationed in Indianapolis, Bob Atcher joined forces with Hoagy Carmichael to write songs for army shows. Transferred to the Pacific, Atcher joined with a number of other

²⁴ Steve Sholes, interview with Tandy Rice, Nashville, 8 February 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Mina Kerstein Curtiss, Letters Home (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1944) 205; Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 182-183; Steven D. Price, Take Me Home: The Rise of Country and Western Music (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974) 130; Jack Stapp quoted in Paul Hemphill, The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970) 151; Nelson Sears, Jim and Jesse: Appalachia to the Grand Ole Opry (Lancaster: Nelson Sears, 1976) 22; D. K. Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition, eds. Americo Paredes and Ellen J. Stekert (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971) 149; Betty Casey, Dance Across Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 44; "G.I.s Tab Their Favorites," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 38 (16 September 1944): 12; "American Folk Songs," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 2 (8 January 1944): 64; Jack Penkola quoted in "American Folk Tunes and Tunesters," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 40 (2 October 1943): 65.

servicemen to organize a traveling music show (By the Numbers) that often performed at precarious locations: "We were at the front--quite often, in between the artillery and the infantry, and we were listed as infantry ourselves. So we were in the active spots all the way along." Some country music performers, like the Bolick Brothers, served in active combat; others, such as Joe Maphis, were assigned to Special Services to entertain troops. After he enlisted, Grandpa Jones brought his guitar with him on his trip overseas to Europe. In Germany, he organized the Munich Mountaineers, performing one hour each morning for five months on the AFN. As Jones recalls, the program generated a considerable amount of mail, both favorable and critical in nature:

We started getting stacks of fan mail from lonely GIs who hadn't been able to hear any real country music since they got overseas; most of the military music was brass bands, and the touring show troops consisted of pop singers like Al Jolson...Of course, we got hold of some people who hadn't heard much country music. Some liked it, some didn't.²⁵

The Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS) deserves a great deal of credit for

²⁵ Johnny Gimble, interview; Nick Tosches, "The Hank Thompson Saga: Reflections of the King of Swing," Country Music Vol. 3, No. 10 (July 1975): 32; Leon McAuliffe, interview with Cecil H. Whaley, Nashville, 19 August 1969, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Ferlin Husky quoted in Whitcomb, After the Ball, 199; "American Folk Tunes and Tunesters," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 39 (25 September 1943): 68; Bob and Maggie Atcher, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 1 May 1987, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Rich Kienzle, "Joe Maphis," Country Musicians: From the Editors of Guitar Player, Keyboard, and Frets Magazines, ed. Judie Eremo (Cupertino: Grove Press, 1987) 68; Grandpa Jones, Everybody's Grandpa: Fifty Years Behind the Mike (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 90-91.

introducing American GIs stationed overseas to country music. On the air since May of 1942, the AFRS quickly mushroomed into a major source of entertainment for Allied Troops. Over the course of 1943, it increased the number of its outlets from twenty-one to 306. The network initially broadcast country music shows as a time-filler between transcribed network shows from the states (most of which featured popular music and comedy). Gradually, however, they began to devote more airtime to programs that featured such popular country music performers as Roy Acuff. Acuff's style, described as D.K. Wilgus as one which "captivated the folk and embarrassed but fascinated others" proved magnetic to AFN listeners. In 1944, Ken Marvin of the Munich Morning Report asked listeners to send in letters, indicating their preference for either Roy Acuff or Frank Sinatra performances. When Acuff supporters sent in 600 more votes, AFN's program directors promptly added two new country music programs to their schedule, Jones' show and a Saturday night feature called the Hillbilly Jamboree. They undoubtedly also found use for the sixteen inch transcriptions and twelve-inch V-Discs shipped to the network that featured Acuff himself. A transcribed thirty-minute network portion of the Grand Ole Opry satisfied the appetites of many Acuff fans; other strained to hear the early morning live broadcast of the entire program. In a letter to Acuff from April 1944, one serviceman stationed in northwest Africa described the Saturday night ritual:

Conditions are still such that once in awhile we are able to hear the Grand Ole Opry direct from the states. It starts coming in over here around two or three in the morning, so we have to make an all night job of it. We usually can hear

it until about six or seven a.m. Here and then she fades out. But it's worth the loss of sleep.

Peters' comments reflect the Grand Ole Opry's expanded popularity, a phenomenon both indicative and contributive to country music's nationalization during the war years.²⁶

The war years represent the Grand Ole Opry's adolescence, the period between the show's pre-war pubescent regionalism and its post-war maturity into country music's paramount barn dance. The Opry's network hook-up in 1939, and coast-to-coast broadcasts begun in July 1940 laid the foundation for the show's wartime growth. In 1943, the network portion of the program reached an audience estimated at twenty-five million listeners. Behind the scenes, the Stone brothers (Harry and David), network producer Jack Stapp, and stage manager Vito Pellettieri usurped George Hay as the program's primary architects some time in the thirties. With his establishment of the WSM Artists' Service Bureau, Harry Stone, in particular, envisioned the show's commercial potential. Together with promoter J. L. Frank, Stone brought several notable acts to the Opry in the late thirties and early forties that contributed to the show ascendancy. By the end of the war, the star-centered system

²⁶ Hugh Cherry, "Country DJs Carry Music to the People," Music City News Vol. 18, No. 4 (October, 1980): 18; Lou Frankel, "Army Broadcasting Selling the World as It Entertains G.I.s on All Six Continents," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 6 (5 February 1944): 3; D. K. Wilgus, "Current Hillbilly Recordings: A Review Article," Journal of American Folklore Vol. 78, No. 309 (July-September 1965): 276; William M. Freeman, "Ol' Mountain Music Drowns Oh-h Frankie," Roy Acuff Scrapbook, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Schlappi, Roy Acuff, 108; Wolfe, Tennessee Strings, 75; I. W. Peters, letter to Roy Acuff, 12 April 1944; Roy Acuff Scrapbook, Country Music Foundation, Nashville.

rebuked in the Opry's early days was firmly in place. In bringing Pee Wee King, Roy Acuff, Eddy Arnold, and Ernest Tubb to the show in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Opry's backstage administrators provided listeners with a peerless cross-section of country musical styles that attracted listeners of various backgrounds from all parts of the country. Acuff (the string band vocalist), Monroe (the progressive instrumentalist), and Arnold (the maturing crooner) represented the present and future of southeastern country music, while King and Tubb symbolized the modernizing forces of the Southwest in their costuming and instrumentation. Together, they liberated the Grand Ole Opry from its pre-war provincialism and set the program on its course to barn dance preeminence. The impact of Monroe's and Arnold's presence did not fully materialize until after the war, and Acuff's influence peaked in the early forties, but King's and Tubb's popularity produced immediate effects. Pee Wee King was not the first country music performer to wear western regalia and other acts anteceded Tubb in using electric instrumentation, but in bringing their styles to the Grand Ole Opry they altered the image protracted and sound produced by southeastern country music bands in unprecedented ways. Ironically, the southeastern-based Grand Ole Opry received its biggest push towards national popularity by adapting southwestern motifs.²⁷

²⁷ Colin Escott, Hank Williams, the Biography (Boston: Little, Brown and Company) 105; John W. Rumble, Roy Acuff (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1983) 11; Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 85; David P. Stone, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 24 May 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

In the years before Pee Wee King brought his western-attired band to the Opry in the late 1930s, Hay's promotion of the burlesque bucolic dominated the show's first decade. With the audience primarily regional, such self-parody seemed as innocuous as it was commercially effective. With the progressives' struggle to attain respectability, however, many country music performers donned clothes and costumes de-emphasizing the hillbilly caricature. Bill Malone points out that the singing mountaineer provided one such alternative, conveying the romantic image of a remote land populated by individualistic and ethnically pure Anglo-Saxons with virtuous moral leanings. The Carter Family personified the unsullied mountain image, projecting what Patrick Carr refers to as "the old country values of harmony, tradition, and continuity". Ultimately, however, the mountaineer image proved unsuitable after government reports, Hollywood movies, and photographer's portraits of southern poverty began appearing with uncomfortable regularity. Some acts, such as the Blue Sky Boys, the Delmore Brothers, and Roy Acuff began wearing suits and sportcoats in an effort to impart a sense of dignity and legitimacy to their music. In one sense, this proved effective, particularly in distancing the music from negative connotations, but it failed to present a unique and vital image that could captivate country music fans and beguile potential listeners. The cowboy image, on the other hand, afforded a more suitable alternative to hillbilly/mountaineer stereotypes and all of their undesirable identifications.²⁸

²⁸ Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 83; Bill C. Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers: Southern Culture and the Roots of Country Music (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993) 76-77; Patrick Carr, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken: the

The widespread national appeal of the cowboy image in the late 1930s and 1940s undoubtedly influenced country musicians' decision to don western garb. Americans first demonstrated an interest in the American cowboy in the late 1800s in their attendance of Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows and their purchase of dime-store western novels. Commenting on the literary works of Zane Grey, Peter Field, and others in the western field, Buck Rainey notes that "(they) created a sensationalized, glorified, romanticized, distorted, imaginative, and downright inaccurate impression of the American cowboy." The publication of cowboy song anthologies in the first two decades of the twentieth century further romanticized the western cowhand. Interest in recording western-style tunes developed after Carl Sprague's "When the Work's All Done This Fall" sold nearly one million copies in the mid-late 1920s. Jimmie Rodgers popularized the western image among a southeastern audience when he recorded several cowboy numbers, while the Prairie Ramblers (on WLS' Barn Dance) introduced a western repertoire to record and radio listeners in the mid-late 1930s. Meanwhile, out in California, the movie industry discovered the profitability of creating low-budget cowboy musicals. Utterly devoid of realism, the singing cowboy films filled a void in the hearts and minds of millions of Americans in the Depression decade. As Douglas B. Green explains, "the singing cowboy...embodied a confluence of many of the aspects of the American dream, representing a sense of glamour and of adventure, a sense of the rugged individuality

Changing Image of Country Music," Country: The Music and the Musicians, eds. Paul Kingbury and Alan Axelrod (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) 488.

Americans have long prized." Self-reliant and resilient, the mythical cowboy of books, songs, and films offered Americans an image of the past that fostered a sense of national pride while offering absolute truths in a time of economic uncertainty.²⁹

Country music performers' espousal of the cowboy image contributed to country music's wartime nationalization in two ways: symbolically, it fostered an association of the musical genre with an American ideal, and, more directly, it offered performers a venue in which they could attain national exposure (i.e. Hollywood films). In regards to the former, Green points out that "no youngster in the thirties and forties ever wanted to grow up to be a hillbilly, but thousands upon thousands wanted to be cowboys." Adopting western regalia and changing its name, a country music act could theoretically transform itself from a hillbilly string band into a cowboy ensemble. Following the prototype established by the Sons of the Pioneers in the 1930s, more and more new groups during and after the war chose names that referred to southwestern geographic locations or traditionally western occupations or imagery. Established performers welcomed the national exposure that the singing cowboy movies offered. Such notables as Bob Wills, Red Foley, Ernest Tubb, and Jimmie

²⁹ Dorothy Horstman, Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy, 3rd Edition (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1996) 321; Buck Rainey, "The 'Reel' Cowboy: Myth Versus Realism," Red River Valley Historical Review Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring, 1975): 25; Holly George-Warren, "Cowboy Cool and Kitsch: The Western Motif in America," Songs of the West (Los Angeles: Rhino Records, 1993) 29; Charlie Seemann, "Cowboy Music: A Historical Perspective," Songs of the West 11; Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 89-90, 122; Willoughby, Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme, 26; Green, "The Singing Cowboy," 5; Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," 146.

Davis all made western films in the early forties. A few shared Roy Acuff's reluctance to wear western costuming in their films:

I am very annoyed when someone calls me a cowboy. You can see there is nothing cowboy about me. Only cowboy song I ever sang was "Home on the Range," and that's the President's favorite. I only sing country or folk songs. When I was in Hollywood they wanted me to dress like a cowboy for a picture and I refused. I don't intend for the public ever to see me as a cowboy.

Acuff reasserted his position in his 1948 gubernatorial campaign: "I am a hillbilly fiddler and singer, and if that is a crime, I'll have to plead guilty to it. I'll even go further than that and tell you I am proud of it." The vast majority of performers who possessed neither Acuff's stature nor his bank account clamored less about the introduction of western stylings into their acts. As Green explains, "the singing cowboy gave much to country music...in dignity and glamour in a time when country music was seen by outsiders and critics as possessing neither." Long after the singing cowboy faded in popularity in Hollywood films, country music retained the western image as a means to furthering their careers. The precedent established such Grand Ole Opry performers as Pee Wee King and Zeke Clements not only survived the war but flourished in the late 1940s and early 1950s.³⁰

³⁰ Green, "Gene Autry," 154; Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 148; Richard A. Peterson and Marcus V. Gowan, "What's in a Country Music Band Name?," Journal of Country Music, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter 1971): 4-5; Ronnie F. Pugh, "The Texas Troubadour: Selected Aspects of the Career of Ernest Tubb," MA thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1978, 73; Wade Austin, "Hollywood Barn Dance: A Brief History of Country Music in Films," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 114; Green, "Singing Cowboy," 40-41, 54-59; Roy Acuff quoted in unidentified

Ernest Tubb's contribution to the southwesternization of the Grand Ole Opry proved more controversial. In bringing an electric guitarist to the show on a regular basis, Tubb virtually revolutionized the program and helped sculpt the configuration of country music in the Southeast after the war. As Ronnie Pugh notes, "Ernest Tubb did more for the Opry in his early years there than the Opry did for him." Tubb made his debut on the network portion of the program in January 1943. Backed by an electric guitar, Tubb's performance elicited a tremendous response from the audience. As Tubb recalls, however, not everyone seemed pleased with his instrumentation: "Judge Hay didn't like it too well, but I said, 'Judge, I make my records this way,' and he finally said to go ahead." Tubb received inspiration for use of electric guitar back-up from a jukebox operator in Fort Worth, who mentioned to Tubb that patrons could not hear his early acoustic sides over the tumults of the nightlife atmosphere. A Jimmie Rodgers devotee, Tubb first recorded with just an acoustic guitar, producing songs that reflected more than a passing resemblance to the Blue Yodeler's singing and playing style. In developing his own sound, Tubb augmented his rhythm acoustic with a lead guitar (played acoustically) at his first Decca sessions in 1940. When lead guitarist Fay "Smitty" Smith plugged in at a 1941 session, the Tubb sound finally coalesced. "Walking the Floor Over You" became Tubb's first big seller and his ticket to the Grand Ole Opry. Described by Pugh as "just a straightforward, no frills,

clipping, Roy Acuff Scrapbook, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Roy Acuff quoted in Schlappi, Roy Acuff, 200; Daniel C. Cooper, Lefty Frizzell: The Honky-Tonk Life of Country Music's Greatest Singer (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995) 155-156; Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 94.

drawling and believable baritone, framed only by the insistent, piercing melody line of an electric guitar," the Ernest Tubb sound epitomized the immediate future of country music. In 1945, the Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder reported that "Ernest Tubb is the most 'imitated' singer in (country) radio today." Beyond his influential use of single-string, lead electric guitar parts, younger performers also frequently emulated Tubb's voice. In stark contrast to country performers influenced by popular vocalists, Tubb used his voice as an instrument for establishing an immediate connection with listeners. Completely natural, Tubb's singing style leant a considerable amount of sincerity to his straightforward lyrics. In the war years, Tubb excelled at exploring the tenuous nature of relationships, with the sparse musical backdrop accenting, rather than subjugating the vocal performance and lyrical emphasis. The addition of a fiddler and a bassist in the latter war years demonstrated the possibilities of applying traditional country imagery to electric instrumentation, what would soon become known as the honky-tonk sound.³¹

Two other native southwestern country music artists aided in the architecture of the honky-tonk sound and the popularization of electric instrumentation in country music: Ted Daffan and Floyd Tillman. Daffan merged his boyhood interest in electronics with his attraction to Hawaiian music when he purchased his first amplifier equipped with a pick-up in 1934. Playing with several Texas bands in the mid-1930s,

³¹ Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 65-67, 84, 94, 113, 363-365; Ernest Tubb quoted in John Etheredge, "Ernest Tubb: The Legend," Country Music Vol. 8, No. 8 (May 1980): 32; Floy Case, "Grand Ole Opry Time," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder ns 5 (September 1945): 12.

Daffan fine-tuned his abilities as an electric steel guitarist and developed an interest in writing country songs. In 1939, the success of Cliff Bruner's version of Daffan's "Truck Driver's Blues" garnered him his own recording contract. From the outset, Daffan worked to establish a unique sound with his own band, one that downplayed the jazziness of the western swing bands he played with yet still utilized electric steel guitar parts. Organized in Dallas around 1940, Ted Daffan's Texans went on to produce several of the most successful country music records of the war years. Remarkably astute at writing lyrics that captured the moods of working class southerners (from his days playing country dances), Daffan scored with songs like "Worried Mind," "Born to Lose," "No Letter Today," and "Headed Down the Wrong Highway." Augmenting his steel guitar with piano, accordion, and lead electric guitar, Daffan created an infectious blend of pop, western, and Texas sounds that appealed to listeners across the country. His economical steel guitar leads undeniably influenced scores of fledging guitarists.³²

Even more uninhibited in his musical approach, Floyd Tillman merged his pioneering single-string, amplified guitar leads with an idiosyncratic vocal style that defied categorization. At an early age the Ryan, Oklahoma native acquired an appreciation of the importance of volume while playing with his older brother: "I was

³² Ted Daffan, interview with Dorothy Gable, Nashville, 31 January 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Nich Tosches, "Ted Daffan," Old Time Music No. 30 (Autumn 1978): 6; Ted Daffan, interview with Garna Christian, Houston, 24 October 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Bob Healy, "The Ted Daffan Story," Country Directory No. 4 (1962): 27; Tom Dunbar, From Bob Wills to Ray Benson: A History of Western Swing Music (Austin: Term Publications, 1988) 54-55.

listening to (his) metal guitar, listening to how weak my mandolin was and I thought, well, I'll never make any money playing on the mandolin." Together with his brothers he began performing locally around Post, Texas (where he grew up) before graduating to the east Texas club scene in the mid-1930s. Battling crowd noise, Tillman initially played a metal acoustic guitar equipped with a resonator to amplify his jazzy solos inspired by the trumpet playing of a fellow band member. As Tillman recalls, audiences at dances did not quite know what to make of his amplified solos: "It was quite a sensation, people just standing around watching me play lead on guitar and it was different because you're not supposed to do that." Once in Houston, he enlisted Ted Daffan's assistance in equipping his amplified guitar with a homemade pickup. In addition to playing regularly with western swing bands, he also took up songwriting. According to Tillman, one of his songs, "It Makes No Difference Now" (covered by Jimmie Davis and Cliff Bruner), became so popular that "one guy in Baytown...shot the jukebox out with a shotgun because he was so sick of it." In 1939, Tillman began a solo career backed by several of his western swing comrades. Trading solos with the likes of Bob Dunn, Moon Mullican, and Cliff Bruner, Tillman's early sound reflected his background in Texas string bands, but he also branched out into the country-pop field on numbers like "I'll Come Back to You" and the popular "They Took the Stars Out of Heaven." By 1944, he appeared ready to fully embrace pop stylings with songs like "There's No Use to Try It Anymore" and "Each Night At Nine" that showcased clarinet solos. After 1945, however, Tillman returned to his Texas roots, releasing some of the hardest hitting honky-tonk songs of the post-war period. Tillman's

wartime sides retain their significance as modifications of the Texas string band sound aimed at a mainstream audience. Taken together with the contemporary recordings of Ernest Tubb and Ted Daffan, they are indicative of the homogenization of regional styles in the first half of the 1940s.³³

The process of musical interaction that began with the barn dances in the 1930s accelerated during World War II as a result of several factors. Wartime migration introduced southerners to northern music and northerners to southern music. For the first time, country music did not seem as foreign to non-southerners. Meanwhile, rural white southerners grew increasingly familiar with urban culture through their own migration to northern and southern cities, thereby modifying their world-view. Folk music parks provided a weekend refuge for many transplanted southerners, as did the traveling country music package shows organized by promoters, but in most cases, they knew there was no going back to the farm. Southerners who enlisted in the armed forces clung to their music and their culture in an effort to cope with homesickness and the perils of war. They brought their guitars or listened to the Grand Ole Opry whenever they could, and in the process of finding release from their concerns introduced their northern counterparts to the music of their homeland. As PXs around the world and jukeboxes across the nation reverberated with the sounds of

³³ John W. Rumble, liner notes, Floyd Tillman, MCA Records CD MCAD-10189, 1991; Malone, Country Music U. S. A., 166; Floyd Tillman quoted in Bob Claypool, "Floyd Tillman—Original Cosmic Cowboy," Houston Post, 21 July 1979; Adam Komorowski, "Floyd Tillman," Hillbilly Researcher, No. 15 (1992): 14, 18-19; Ed Ward, "'Retired' Floyd Tillman's Still Making Music," Austin American Statesman, 30 January 1981; Floyd Tillman, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 13 October 1986, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

country music, thousands upon thousands of Americans grew increasingly attracted to the genre's earthy and patriotic lyrical themes. Meeting the American public halfway, many performers adapted popular instrumentation and non-southern costuming in an effort to further the country music cause. Aided by movies and the inner-struggles of the popular music industry, country music gained tremendous national exposure and established itself as a legitimate American art form. World War II shattered the cultural isolation of the rural white South and its music and in the process brought about the nationalization of both.

Within the world of country music, the rigid boundary between the Southeast and the Southwest grew increasingly inconspicuous. Just as the southeastern progressives borrowed from one another in the 1930s, they adopted the musical stylings and cultural image of their southwestern colleagues in the early 1940s. Gene Autry, Tex Ritter, and Al Dexter demonstrated quite clearly the appeal of pop instrumentation and the cowboy look, while Ernest Tubb, Ted Daffan and Floyd Tillman helped convince them of the possibilities of incorporating electric instrumentation into their traditionally acoustic musical matrix. For their own part, southwesterners proceeded in their established pattern of musical experimentation, increasingly leaning toward dance-based music with a beat for entertainment and solace. In time, many would incorporate the realism so prevalent in southeastern lyrics with the Tubb-Daffan-Tillman musical hybrid, creating a diffuse sub-genre currently referred to as honky-tonk. Others shunned lyrical realism and all musical restraints, turning instead to a country music anomaly known as western swing.

CHAPTER THREE—THE SOUTHWESTERN COMPONENT: TEXAS/WESTERN SWING AND URBAN COUNTRY MUSIC

Country music that falls under the umbrella of "western swing" includes a variety of improvisational musical styles designed for dancing that originated primarily west of the Mississippi River in the 1930s. Unlike pre-war country musicians of the Southeast, western swing practitioners demonstrated less interest in lyrical content than they did in the overall musical effect of their performances. More urban in both its sound and audience, western swing evinced a worldly sophistication and cosmopolitan outlook divergent from contemporary country music. Isolated from mainstream country music in its incipient years, western swing provided much of the musical framework for country music's post-war modernization by infusing the genre with its heavy beat and modern instrumentation. Western swing vanquished country music's provincial outlook and adherence to conventional instrumentation. In just over ten years, western swing grew from small musical combos performing at Texas house parties to large orchestras playing Los Angeles dance halls. In its antagonism towards southeastern country music and its increasing affiliation with popular music, western swing eventually perished in the early 1950s when Nashville rose to prominence and when country music in general reached its apogee in national appeal. Before its postwar plummet, however, western swing reached a spectacular summit in popularity and influence unmatched by any other sub-genre.

Evolutionary and eclectic, western swing in many ways defies definition and description. The term "western swing," in fact, did not become a regular label for the

sub-genre until after World War II. Prior to the war, record companies labeled early western swing as "Novelty Hot Dance" or "Hot String Band" music. In 1941, the Victor recording company referred to its latest release of Texas and Louisiana country groups as "Texas Swing." In October, 1944, Billboard offered the following announcement, unceremoniously linking the term with the label for the first time in a national publication: "Spade Cooley will put out 25 of his original tunes, together with an album of band numbers and suggestions on arrangements for Western Bands. Book to be titled Western Swing." The most straightforward definitions of the sub-genre center on its musical characteristics. Bob Wills describes western swing in this paradigm: "West of the Mississippi River when we played, we played for dancing. East of the Mississippi river they played a show, or they played a schoolhouse, just for people to sit and listen, visual or audible entertainment and not for dancing." Hank Thompson complements Wills' description of the sub-genre with more emphasis on the music itself: "The (music of the Southeast) was more the hill country music, banjos and fiddles, where the music of the Southwest was a lot more up--you know, up-tempo and had more life to it, more of a lively type thing." Country music historian Bob Pinson forthrightly refers to western swing as "the Southwest's response to the big dance band." As an amalgam of American popular, jazz, and Texas folk music, the sub-genre represents country music's first response to the urban environment. The birth of western swing occurred when guitar-fiddle duets playing at Texas house parties began augmenting their sound with rhythmic instruments (i.e., piano, banjo, string bass) in an effort to provide a more danceable beat for listeners.

Gradually, as the music moved into dancehalls, these bands soon discovered the importance of volume, a problem solved through the electric amplification of a variety of instruments (from Hawaiian steel guitars to mandolins). Growing up in an environment of ethnic diversity and responsive to the popular and jazz music they heard on records and radio, western swing performers thrived on musical improvisation and experimentation. While some experimented with amplification, other augmented their sound with horn sections. Invariably, all western swing bands of the late thirties and forties accentuated the primacy of a rhythmic thrust that kept listeners dancing while providing their musicians with plenty of leeway to showcase their mastery of instruments. Over the course of the period, instrumental emphasis varied among different schools of western swing. In Texas, the fiddle more often than not became the focal point of most country swing bands, particularly in the early period.¹

Brought over to America in the early colonial period, the fiddle became a mainstay at informal community gatherings, particularly in rural areas. While

¹ Bob Pinson, liner notes, Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers, Bluebird LP AXM2-5503, 1975; "Music Grapevine," The Billboard, Vol. 56, No. 43 (21 October 1944): 19; Bob Wills quoted in Charles R. Townsend, San Antonio Rose: The Life and Music of Bob Wills (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976) 38; Hank Thompson quoted in Rich Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 1946-1964 (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 6; Al Cuniff, liner notes, Western Swing, Volume One, Franklin Mint Record Society LP FMRS-CW-075/076, 1984; Tony Russell, Blacks, Whites, and Blues (New York: Stein and Day, 1970) 88; Garna L. Christian, "It Beats Picking Cotton: The Origins of Houston Country Music," Red River Valley Historical Review Vol. 7 No. 3 (Summer 1982): 39-40; Robert Coltman, "Across the Chasm: How the Depression Changed Country Music," Old Time Music No 23 (Winter 1976-1977): 11; D. K. Wilgus, "Current Hillbilly Recordings: A Review Article," Journal of American Folklore Vol. 78, No. 309 (July-September 1965): 278.

frowned upon by several religious denominations, the fiddle remained popular among a variety of social classes in the rural South throughout the nineteenth century. In Texas, as in the Southeast, the fiddle became an important fixture at rural house parties and at informal dances ("frolics") throughout the nineteenth century. Texas fiddlers at these gatherings played everything from Old World tunes to current popular favorites, encompassing a variety of musical styles from waltzes to reels. In addition to playing at dances, fiddlers could also demonstrate their musical abilities at fiddling contests. The popularity of these contests in Texas carried over into the twentieth century and encouraged improvisation among fiddlers in the state. In contrast to the short-bowed, rhythmic style of fiddling so popular in the Southeast, Texas fiddlers inclined toward a long-bowed style that permitted them to add melodic adornments to familiar tunes. Some long-bowed fiddlers utilized this technique to incorporate elements of blues into their playing, invoking it with more feeling and less technique, while others embraced jazzy solos termed "take-offs" as a means to demonstrating their musical dexterity. In addition to blues and jazz influences, Texas fiddlers also borrowed heavily from the various ethnic groups that inhabited the state. In the process, they established the precedent of musical amalgamation that provided a crucial element in western swing's early development.²

² "Country Instruments and Players," The Country Music Book, ed. Michael Mason (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1985) 175-176, 185; Bill C. Malone, Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers: Southern Culture and the Roots of Country Music (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993) 33, 36-38, 175-176; Carney, "Music and Dance," This Remarkable Continent: An Atlas of United States and Canadian Society and Culture, eds. John F. Rooney, Jr., Wilbur Zelinsky, et al. (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1982) 234; Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 2nd ed.

The first settlers in Texas included whites from the Southeast. Migrants from the Appalachians brought with them their fondness of Anglo-American folk songs and their Scotch/Irish-derived fiddling style. In time, several central European immigrant groups (e.g. Germans and Bohemians) settled in Texas as well, bringing their penchant for polkas, schottisches, and waltzes to the region. Cajuns from Louisiana transported a French cultural element while Mexicans already in the area introduced Texans to Norteño music popular in northern Mexico. For almost all ethnic groups, dances were highly anticipated social events, with fiddlers generally taking center stage. By the early 1900s, Texas fiddlers demonstrated an appreciation of all of these ethnic elements, as well as an exposure to African American music. As Lawrence Levine explains, black musical idioms proved particularly attractive to performers with improvisational inclinations: "Many of the whites who found jazz and blues stimulating in the 1920s and 1930s did so because these musical forms seemed to promise them greater freedom of expression." The advent of the country music era in the early 1920s allowed for the further intermingling of musical styles. Additionally, Dixieland jazz, Hawaiian music, and popular music all made an impact on Texas musicians. Audience preferences equally influenced the Texas bands' choice of material. In 1940, Variety offered the following advice to band leaders with upcoming dates in Texas:

(Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 16, 23-24; Charles R. Townsend, "A Brief History of Western Swing," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 31; Charles Seemann, liner notes, Bob Wills: Fiddle, Country Music Foundation Records LP CMF-010-L, 1987.

Be prepared to play 1) Viennese waltzes 2) the schottische 3) the polka 4) the varsovienne. To be perfectly safe, (they) should have "Get Along Sally," "Turkey in the Straw," "Little Brown Jug," and other Ozark items in (their) repertoire.

Somewhere at the point where blues, jazz, and traditional Texas folk music intersect, a hybrid developed that bunched all three musical forms into one danceable package. As a product of over one hundred years of ethnic and musical conglomeration, no one musician invented western swing. Two performers in the 1930s, however, deserve credit for complementing the Texas musical matrix with a danceable rhythm, thereby forging "Texas Swing," the precursory sound that would later develop into "western swing."³

Milton Brown and Bob Wills each made distinct contributions to the Texas string band sound in the process of creating the western swing anomaly. Brown popularized a much smoother vocal approach than the one used by other Texas string band vocalists (which were few in number to begin with). He also introduced the piano (via Fred "Papa" Calhoun) and the electric steel guitar (through Bob Dunn) to Texas country music. Wills took Brown's important innovations one step further,

³ Carney, "Music and Dance," 239; Francis Edward Abernathy, "Texas Folk and Modern Country Music," Texas Country: The Changing Rural Scene, eds. Glen E. Lich and Dona B. Reeves-Marquardt (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1986) 152; Patrick Carr, "Country Music: The Rich Texas Connection and its Evolution," Houston Chronicle September 1979; Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 294; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 152; "Texas Hoofing Can't Make Up Its Mind—Hillbilly or Waltzes," Variety, Vol. 138, No. 4 (3 January 1940): 217.

adding horns and more complex arrangements to the mix while never losing sight of the music's rural roots. In Brown's Musical Brownies and Wills' Texas Playboys, the rhythm section provided a heavy beat that enabled other musicians to improvise on their solos. While their musical visions were by no means congruent, both worked in similar ways to expand the sound of the traditional Texas string band for the dance hall atmosphere.

Western swing historian Garna Christian terms Fort Worth, Texas "the cradle of modern Texas music" because both Wills and Brown began their musical experimentations there in the late twenties and early thirties. Brown arrived in Fort Worth with his family in 1918, singing with his father occasionally at house dances and at other informal gatherings before forming a vocal trio nearly a decade later. From the outset, his vocal style was unique among his Texas peers, owing more to popular and jazz music than to country music vocalists. In 1929, he met Bob Wills and Herman Arnspiger at a house party in Fort Worth. Along with Brown's brother Derwood, they soon formed a band. Together they began appearing regularly at the Eagles Hall Lodge, with the band offering a unique blend of the popular tunes Brown sang with his vocal group and the country music/Texas ethnic conglomeration Wills grew up with. Brown used a megaphone to increase the volume of his voice at these dance events until around 1930, when he began using a public address system. By late 1931, the group (known as the Light Crust Doughboys) was appearing on 50,000 watt WBAP (working with Wilbert Lee O'Daniel), in addition to their regular local performances. Brown clashed with Daniel over the latter's opposition to the group's

dance appearances. Moving to rival station KTAT, Brown and his band (by then consisting of his brother on rhythm guitar, Ocie Stockard on tenor banjo, and Wanna Coffman on string bass) began appearing frequently at the Crystal Springs Dancing Pavilion, about three miles west of Fort Worth. The addition of Fred "Papa" Calhoun to the band in late 1932 advanced the band further from the traditional Texas string band sound. Up to that point, the Musical Brownies were limited in their musical improvisation due to their preoccupation with maintaining a strong rhythm for dancing. With the addition of Calhoun's piano, the group found a way to add both volume and improvisation to their danceable rhythm, essentially establishing the foundation of the western swing sound. In the fall of 1934, Brown hired steel guitarist Bob Dunn to the fold. The first country musician to amplify the steel guitar, Dunn provided even more volume while his trombone-modeled playing style moved the band even closer to a jazz sound without forsaking the rhythmic requirement. At the time of Brown's death in 1936, the Musical Brownies were one of the most popular bands (and perhaps the most renown) in Texas. The Brownies' instrumental make-up virtually revolutionized the Texas string band, (heretofore consisting of a fiddle, guitar and banjo), reconfiguring it for dance hall purposes. Additionally, Brown introduced into the Texas string band repertoire dozens of popular, jazz and blues numbers, many of which became western swing standards. Brown essentially took Texas country music to town, urbanizing it and electrifying it in ways previously unimaginable. He left a legion of followers in the

Southwest.⁴

Bob Wills incorporated into Brown's vision a luminous personality and energy that transformed the Musical Brownie sound into the apparition that became western swing. While Brown deserves recognition for laying the groundwork for the sub-genre, Wills merits the honor of giving it its vivacious style and country character. From his bluesy fiddle playing to his cowboy hat and boots, Wills instilled enough rural ornamentations into the music to preserve its folk lineage without forsaking its urban orientation. In the process, he introduced its progressive sounds to a southern audience that would have otherwise balked at its musical embellishments. Throughout his career, Wills remained more popular west of the Mississippi River than he did in the Southeast, with his audience plainly distinguishable from the traditional country crowd. Nevertheless, Wills managed to connect with a variety of regional and economic demographics and in the end bridged the gap between urban and rural, South and West, black and white, and past and present more effectively than any other country performer before or since.

Wills learned to play the fiddle at an early age, performing in public when he was about ten years old. As a teen, he accompanied his fiddle-playing father at dances while working a variety of jobs during the week. As a youth, he gained exposure to a variety of musical styles, including blues, Spanish/Mexican, Texas folk, and country

⁴ Christian, "It Beats Picking Cotton," 38; Cary Ginell, Milton Brown and the Founding of Western Swing (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) xvii-xxxi, 16-112; Larry Willoughby, Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme: A Pictorial History of Texas Music (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1984) 11.

music. In the late twenties, he returned from a stint in a medicine show to form the Wills Fiddle Band that Brown joined in 1930. Wills remained with O'Daniel after Brown left to form his Musical Brownies, but parted ways with the flour mill owner/politician in 1933, eventually moving to Waco, where he formed his first incarnation of his Texas Playboys. In 1934, an ever-expanding version of the band began appearing on KVOO in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which they maintained as a musical base until 1942.⁵

Once in Tulsa, the distinctive elements of the Bob Wills pre-war sound began to fall into place. As the group's emerging lead vocalist, Tommy Duncan possessed one of country music's most versatile voices, able to sing everything from Jimmie Rodgers tunes to popular standards in a thoroughly convincing manner. He also possessed a remarkable ability to memorize song lyrics which proved indispensable given the band's wide spectrum of material (by 1938, some 3,600 selections). Leon McAuliffe joined the band as steel guitarist in 1935. While enamored with Bob Dunn's revolutionary amplified sound, McAuliffe soon developed his own style, as much based on Hawaiian music as it was jazz. Other intrical members of the group included fiddler Jesse Ashlock, jazz pianist Al Stricklin, and drummer Smokey Dacus, all of whom remained with Wills for most of his tenure at KVOO. Dacus' presence indicated the uniqueness of Wills' outfit. Unlike smaller bands that followed the Milton Brown model, Wills' numbered eighteen by 1940, with a full brass and reed

⁵ Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 1-90; Ruth Sheldon Knowles, Bob Wills: Hubbin' It (1938; Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1995) 84; William J. Ivey, liner notes, The Bob Wills Anthology, Columbia LP KG 32416, 1973.

section in addition to the augmented rhythmic component. Dacus' drums offered a sturdy rhythmic pulse that freed up even more instruments for improvisation. Another important addition to the group, guitarist Eldon Shamblin, arrived in 1937. A jazz guitarist with a knowledge of music theory, Shamblin played an important role in arranging songs for the large group, as well as developing the twin-guitar (lead standard and steel) sound with McAuliffe that became one of the band's signatures.⁶

While a musician's credentials certainly played into Wills' selection of them, a performer's personality and musical versatility dictated his duration with the group. As Bill Malone points out, "Wills' genius lay in his ability to attract musicians who could play jazz and other forms of music, and in his skill to extract from them every ounce of musicianship they possessed." At dances, Wills required his musicians to be ever-ready to take solos when the leader pointed his bow at them. As Eldon Shamblin explains, Wills relished in the extemporaneous efforts of his crew: "The (musical) choruses was every man for himself. Nothing cut and dried, because the old man didn't like it that way." More often than not, the musician rose to the occasion and enjoyed the challenge. For many musicians, entering Bob Wills' Texas Playboys became as much of an endurance test as it was a musical challenge. Al Stricklin

⁶ Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 98, 151-152; Leon McAuliffe, interview with Cecil H. Whaley, Nashville, 19 August 1969, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Bob Pinson, liner notes, Leon McAuliffe and his Western Swing Band, Columbia LP FCT 38908, 1984; Rich Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," 170; Rich Kienzle, Bob Wills (Alexandria: Time-Life, 1982) 14; Mark Humphrey, "Playboy Days, Part I: Eldon Shamblin Talking to Mark Humphrey," Old Time Music No. 23 (Winter 1976-1977): 15, 20.

recalls words of advise (or warning) that Wills gave prior to his entering the band in the mid thirties:

Strick, we work hard. We travel a lot and we don't get much sleep. You can just smell them old bodies getting lathered up and emotional. And then there's the winters. They're just as bad as the summer. Your fingers are going to get cold, and when you hit them old keys they are going to hurt, but you've got to keep smiling. And keep playing.

Wills also encouraged his musicians to intermingle with the audience, a process which enabled Wills to discern a crowd's musical tastes and structure the band's performance around them. In smaller towns, he often emphasized strings more, with particular emphasis on fiddling, at larger, urban venues like Cain's Academy in Tulsa, he would bring out his larger, big band ensemble. With a band capable of playing everything from square-dances to sophisticated popular numbers, Wills appealed to multiple economic and social strata, from young adults to the elderly, from the rural, working class to urban professionals with a sound described by Art Satherley as "semi-country, semi-city." Not surprisingly, Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys became the Southwest's most popular band in the late 1930s by giving the people what they wanted. As their leader explains: "We give 'em western music...but we give 'em rhumbas too. And when there are jitterbuggers in the joint we get 'em so happy they can't stay on the floor. We lay it on like they want it."⁷

⁷ Knowles, Hubbin' It, 84, 89-90; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 172; Eldon Shamblin quoted in "Playboy Days, Part I," 20; Al Stricklin and Jon McConal, My Years With Bob Wills (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1976) 14; Townsend, San Antonio

More than anything else, Bob Wills understood that when people came to see his band, they came to dance and to revel in his showmanship. His audience appeal was nothing short of spectacular, with listeners mesmerized by his magnetic personality. Al Sticklin recalls a typical Bob Wills entrance:

I heard the damnedest racket I had ever heard. There was applause, yelling and whistling. People just going wild. Bob Wills had finally arrived. He got up there with us (on stage) and drug his fiddle out of its case...When Bob started, the applause drowned out the music.

Eldon Shamblin offers another observation regarding Wills' popularity: "Back in '40, '41, he couldn't even walk down the street. He was hotter than a pistol." A master of showmanship with an infectious zest for life, Wills offered his musicians freedom from all constraint and his listeners deliverance from the prosaic details of everyday life.⁸

Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys backed up their swagger with uncanny musical abilities. While their recorded output of the 1930s and early 1940s does not quite capture the rapture of a Bob Wills dance, it does demonstrate his band's versatility and vivacity. Two selections from their initial session for Columbia records

Rose, 134, 150-152, 201; Robert Shelton, The Country Music Story: A Picture History of Country and Western Music (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966) 173; Art Satherley, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hollywood, 30 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Bob Wills quoted in Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 152.

⁸ Stricklin, My Years With Bob Wills, 32-33; Eldon Shamblin quoted in "Playboy Days, Part I," 20.

in 1935, "Osage Stomp" and "Get With It," adequately convey the band's dynamic energy. "Maiden's Prayer" and "Spanish Two-Step" offer glimpses into Wills' rural and Texas folk roots. Wills' penchant for blues material shows up on "Sittin' On Top of the World," a number originally recorded by Mississippi Sheiks and later covered by a black string band in 1930. Wills' horn section, originally objected to by producer Art Satherley, proved quite capable of playing blues ("No Matter How She Done It"), Dixieland Jazz ("Old Fashioned Love in My Heart"), swing ("Oh! You Beautiful Doll"), and big band music ("Lyla Lou"). Leon McAuliffe's innovative electric steel guitar work dominates numbers like "Steel Guitar Rag" and "Tulsa Stomp," and working with Eldon Shamblin, the steel guitar-lead guitar duet sound moves front and center on "Twin Guitar Special" and "Honey, What You Gonna Do." Shamblin's arrangement of the virtually stringless "Big Beaver" was indicative of the band's inclination towards a big band sound as the thirties progressed. Wills and Satherley frequently disagreed on Wills' use of brass at the expense of strings. Satherley explains his objection to Wills' attraction to the big band sound: "A few of the brass section recordings we threw out, or had to cancel, because people were returning them saying they didn't believe this was Bob Wills with brass in his band." Wills' artistic vision stemmed less from his objection to country material than it did a desire to stretch musical boundaries, as drummer Smokey Dacus points out: "Bob Wills would never allow music to be put into a straightjacket. It did not have to conform to anything but human feeling." Part of Wills' secret to success directly related to his sagacious perception of the diffuse relationship between country and popular music.

Like Jimmie Rodgers before him, Wills casually mixed the two musical idioms in an effort to reach a wider audience. The spectacular pre-war success of "New San Antonio Rose" offered a model for future western swing performers intent on penetrating the pop market. In consistently reverting to his country and southern roots both lyrically (e.g. "Home in San Antone," "That's What I Like About the South") and musically (e.g. "Time Changes Everything," "Take Me Back to Tulsa"), however, Wills sustained his popularity among country music listeners. His adoption of cowboy attire around 1939 further solidified his rural following. In discreetly augmenting his sound with brass and reeds, he tested not only his musicians' abilities but his listeners preconceived notions as well. In doing so, Wills simultaneously introduced popular music to the country audience and country music to urbanites. Commonplace in later decades, this achievement was rather remarkable in the late 1930s. Wills himself proved an extremely capable musical politician, simultaneously sharply refuting an association with southeastern country music ("Please don't anybody confuse us with none of them hillbilly outfits") while unfailingly remaining faithful to its folkish roots.⁹

A Texas swing performer who successfully bridged the gap between traditional and progressive sounds on more of a regional basis was Bill Boyd. Born to a farming

⁹ Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night": A History of Louisiana Country Music diss., Tulane University, 1995. (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 120; Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 201-209; Art Satherley, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 15 October 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Smokey Dacus quoted in Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 105; Humphrey, "Playboy Days, Part I," 19, 21; Bob Wills quoted in "Strickly By Ear," Time Vol. 47, No. 6 (11 February 1946): 50.

family in Fannin County, Texas in 1910, Boyd, his brother Jim, and two neighbors began their radio career in 1926. They remained part-time musicians when they moved to Dallas in 1929, where Bill began working at a series of odd jobs while Jim continued his schooling. In 1930, Bill Boyd and two cohorts passed an audition for a spot on Dallas' WFAA. By 1932, Jim entered the fold and the group (now called the Cowboy Ramblers) moved to WRR, where they remained for twenty years. As a four-piece string band consisting of Bill Boyd on guitar, Jim Boyd on bass, Art Davis on fiddle and Walter Kirkes on banjo, the group made their initial recordings in 1934.¹⁰

A strong western flavor dominated the group's early pressings, but with the addition of fiddler Jesse Ashlock and electric steel guitarist Wilson "Lefty" Perkins, the group began experimenting with the Texas swing sound. "River Blues" (from February 1936) represents a turning point for the band, with Perkins playing Dunn-like solos and Ashlock delivering a bluesy vocal. Tunes like "Goofus" and "Way Out There" (also from 1936) showed the band sticking close to its western roots, but "Saturday Night Rag" and "Draggin' It Around (Draggin' the Bow)" demonstrate the band's improvisational abilities, particularly in Ashlock's and newcomer Cecil Brower's fiddling. Centered around Bill Boyd's acoustic guitar, the band's rhythm section offered plenty of room for musical experimentation, with the group gradually increasing to eight members by 1938. On the sales success of "Under the Double Eagle" (1935) and "New Spanish Two-Step" (1938), the group continued to focus on

¹⁰ Pinson, liner notes, Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers; Tom Dunbar, From Bob Wills to Ray Benson: A History of Western Swing Music (Austin: Term Publications, 1988) 15-17.

instrumentals well into the 1940s, with nearly thirty percent of its recorded output between 1939 and 1954 in this vein.¹¹

In their pre-war sides, the band recorded several polkas, some instrumental and some with vocals. In "Flower of Texas" the group blends ethnic influences with the twin fiddle style that was increasingly gaining popularity among western swing bands. "Jitterbug Jive" offers an early glimpse of country music's experimentation with the boogie beat, while "I'll Take You Back Again" and "Sweethearts or Strangers" hint at the more mainstream approach Boyd would take after the war. For the most part, however, the pre-war sides show Boyd adhering to older, regional styles. "Sunset Trail to Texas" and "My Pony on the Range" harkened back to the band's early western material, while "Down at Polka Joe's", "Xenda Waltz," and "Don't Let the Beer Barrel Go Dry" demonstrate the continual ethnic influence on Boyd's music. Boyd also carries on the early country-blues tradition of producing risqué numbers ("You Better Stop that Cattin' Around") as well as showing the influence of Milton Brown ("Hold On to That Thing"). In his steadfastness to older styles, Boyd maintained a loyal, albeit isolated following.

The war altered Boyd's musical perceptions somewhat, moving him closer to mainstream post-war western swing, with all its pop inclinations. During the war, he toured extensively with USO shows on the bond-selling circuit and made several guest appearances on various radio shows throughout the country. Occassionally, he toured

¹¹ Pinson, Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers; Brad McCuen, "Bill Boyd and His Cowboy Ramblers," Disc Collector No. 3 (c. 1961): 15-20.

conjunctively with units from the Grand Ole Opry and National Barn Dance. In early 1945, he resumed appearances with the Allied Theatres Circuit, playing dates in Texas, Pittsburgh, and Beverly Hills all within the span of a month. In June 1945, he recorded his most commercially-orientated sides with an New York ensemble led by Frank Novak, Jr. His version of "At Mail Call Today," complete with sweeping violins and reeds, was even closer to pop than Autry's rendition. Only a weeping steel guitar and Boyd's plaintive vocal lend any country feel to the sessions. The return of Cecil Brower and the addition of Noel Boggs on steel guitar in 1947 moved Boyd back to instrumental pieces like "New Fort Rag" and "Southern Steel Guitar." In 1949, Boyd's ever-changing lineup included legendary western swing banjoist Marvin Montgomery, who brought an old-time feel to the group (e.g. "Lone Star Rag"). On his last sessions in 1950 and 1951, Boyd dabbled in everything from modern country ("Why Don't You Love Me") to polkas ("Stop"). To the very end of his recording career, Boyd harbored both an appreciation of western swing's roots and a willingness to experiment with newer sounds.¹²

From the start, Boyd's strong suit was always ethnic and western material, and by the mid-fifties both types of music had plummeted in popularity. Additionally, Boyd never really saw his group as a dance outfit, preferring to play show dates and radio appearances instead of the dancehall circuit. As a result, Boyd's brand of

¹² "Second Bill Boyd Bond Tour of West Coast," Bill Boyd's Ranch House News Vol. 1, No. 3 (August-September 1943): 1; "Bill Boyd and His Cowboy Ramblers on Navy Appearances," Bill Boyd's Ranch House News Vol. 3, No. 1 (1946): 2; "Bill Boyd," Bill Boyd's Ranch House News Vol. 4, No. 6 (June 1947): 1; "Bill Boyd a Hit in Pictures," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder No. 18 (January 1944): 7.

western swing never really caught on after the war, despite his radio popularity and his use of some of western swing's finest musicians. Boyd deserves considerable credit, however, for innovatively merging western imagery with southwest swing and for keeping alive the ethnic and Texas string-band tradition that sparked western swing's creation. Additionally, as western swing's leading ambassador in World War II, Boyd helped the sub-genre break free of its pre-war southwestern regionalism.¹³

While Bill Boyd and Bob Wills continually reaffirmed western swing's folk roots, another group of Texas musicians worked to shed the sub-genre of its rural and western trappings. Profoundly influenced by Milton Brown's modernistic approach, many members of this school (some former Musical Brownies) employed a more urban approach to western swing, wearing suits instead of cowboy hats and playing more jazz than country blues and traditional folk numbers. Like Wills, they stressed improvisational solos backed by a sturdy rhythm section; unlike Wills, however, they adhered more to Brown's streamlined principle, seldom having more than six members in their groups. They also relied more on amplification to create the full sound needed to reverberate off the walls in the Texas dance halls they so frequently played. The Milton Brown school of western swing never really caught on outside of Texas like the Bob Wills-inspired groups would after the war, yet it proved influential on both country music's and western swing's post-war development, particularly in its emphasis on lead electric guitar solos.

Milton Brown's followers created a sound more urban in style and content

¹³ Pinson, Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers.

than any other group of country performers in the decade before the end of the second World War. Essentially a product of Texas urbanization, the musical style developed by groups like Bob Dunn's Vagabonds, Leon Selph's Blue Ridge Playboys, and Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers matured in an environment bustling with social tumult. In the late 1930s, towns like Beaumont, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Houston reeled in the oil-boom that began around the turn of the century. Historian Daniel Cooper captures the chaos that accompanied the discovery of oil in eastern Texas: "Beaumont set the paradigm for all future oil booms. The city was a blueprint for swindles, gunfire, gambling, mud, sex on the cheap, and leased trades on the basis of rumor and speculation." The first southern state to experience rapid urbanization, Texas witnessed a forty-one percent increase in its urban population in the 1920s, with Houston more than doubling in size and Dallas-Fort Worth swelling with migrants. During the oil boom, Dallas experienced a transformation from the cotton and livestock business center of the region to the oil-capital of the state. By 1940, nearly one-quarter of all white Texans (as defined by the United States Census Bureau) lived in cities of 50,000 people or more. Exponential urban population increases continued with the coming of World War II, with the area around Beaumont witnessing a fifty-nine percent increase in its population between 1940 and 1943. Dallas and Fort Worth, meanwhile, became manufacturing centers, with workers employed in this economic sector rising within the city of Dallas 184 percent between 1940 and 1953 (three times the national average). In the midst of economic and social revolution, Texas towns filled with refinery workers and war plant employees, some hell-bent

on having a good time, others just looking for trouble. For musical background, as Frances Willoughby notes, "every tavern from the rail yards of Dalhart to the refineries of Orange had either a live band or a jukebox." For those interested in dancing, ballrooms and dancehalls offered an alternative to the tavern atmosphere.¹⁴

In the late thirties and early forties, western swing performers began appearing across the Southwest in numerous dancehalls. Generally, one or two bands dominated the scene in major cities. In Dallas-Fort Worth, Roy Newman and His Boys' blend of blues and New Orleans jazz brought out the crowds, while Adolph Hofner brought his blend of Milton Brown swing and thorough knowledge of German and Czech ethnic music to San Antonio. Hofner transformed an interest in Hawaiian, popular, and Jimmie Rodgers music into Texas swing after hearing Milton Brown. Like so many other Brown aficionados, Hofner was attracted to the full sound The Musical Brownies delivered. In Houston, a number of other Milton Brown-influenced groups surfaced, most notably Leon Selph's Blue Ridge Playboys and Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers. While never quite the dancehall town Beaumont

¹⁴ Daniel C. Cooper, Lefty Frizzell: The Honky-Tonk Life of Country Music's Greatest Singer (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995) 101; Stephen Tucker, "The Western Image in Country Music," MA thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1976, 76-77; Martin V. Melosi, "Dallas-Fort Worth, Marketing the Metroplex," Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II, eds. Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983) 163-164; Pete Daniel, "Going Among Strangers: Southern Reactions to World War II," Journal of American History Vol. 77, No. 3 (December 1990): 901; Willoughby, Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme, 15.

would become after the war, Houston became a focal point for innovative Texas musicians.¹⁵

Ironically, the town where Ted Daffan, Cliff Bruner, Leon Selph, and Floyd Tillman all played at one time or another was initially hostile to Texas string bands. Jerry Irby, leader of the popular Bar-X-Cowboys, recalls that many dance hall owners harbored a skepticism about a country band's ability to bring in crowds. Irby eventually sidestepped the issue by opening his own hall around 1940. Leon Selph similarly recalls the reaction he received from owners of large dance venues:

You couldn't book into the dance halls because they didn't want no guitars and fiddles... and they had good reason, too. They said that guitars and fiddles just wouldn't be loud enough to entertain the crowd of people that they had. They had four, five, six hundred people in their dance halls.

Selph and other performers solved the problem in two ways; first, by renting or buying halls themselves, and second, by amplifying their instruments. Club owners eventually became more receptive to the eclectic string bands after seeing the amazing turnouts for their appearances. As Selph recalls, many urbanites outrightly opposed band appearances, while others regularly attended: "(Houston) was especially hard-nosed about country music...They didn't want to have nothing to do with the country music but when we gave a dance we had a hall full of people...(and) a lot of our crowds were not people that lived in the country." In securing the dancehalls, Texas

¹⁵ Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 168; Tony Russell, liner notes, South Texas Swing, Arhoolie CD-7029, 1994.

string bands found a way to make a living playing music. The halls drew enough patrons in one night than most southeastern bands could play to in a week. Hank Thompson explains:

If you'd go play those schoolhouses...you'd have a house full of people and you still didn't come out makin' a whole lot of money. Where at dances, they'd charge like a dollar and four to five hundred people came for that and you'd get sixty to seventy percent off the door.

Texas' early urbanization together with the repeal of Prohibition opened the dancehalls and provided musicians with a unique and possibly lucrative opportunity. In conquering the amplification obstacle and convincing hall owners of their popularity, they opened the door to playing halls with even larger capacities.¹⁶

No single performer deserves more credit for popularizing amplified guitar in western swing than Bob Dunn. Leon McAuliffe, Floyd Tillman, and Bobby Simons (Al Dexter's guitarist in the mid-thirties) all made important contributions to the sub-genre with their popularization of amplified instruments, but none equaled Dunn in stature or influence in the Southwest of the mid-late 1930s. In stark contrast to his southeastern steel guitar counterparts, Dunn eagerly embraced sophisticated urban sounds and styles to the point that the bands he played with bore little if any semblance to a country ensemble. Steadfast in his desire to transform the steel guitar

¹⁶ Jerry Irby, interview with Garna Christian, n.p., 20 November 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Leon Selph, interview with Garna Christian, n.p., 28 September 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Hank Thompson quoted in Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 23.

into a jazz instrument, Dunn eventually drifted into country music obscurity in the post-war years. Between the mid thirties and early forties, however, as Eldon Shamblin points out, "he was the steel guitar player."¹⁷

Born in Oklahoma in 1908, Bob Dunn began his musical education listening to the traditional breakdown tunes his fiddle-playing father liked to play. As he grew older, however, he became intrigued with both Hawaiian and jazz music, two styles that he eventually blended into the development of his own unique steel guitar playing style. In the late twenties and early thirties he performed with a variety of bands, specializing in everything from western to jazz music. By the time he auditioned for Milton Brown's group in 1934, he had developed a unique sound on his steel guitar, playing the instrument as if it were a horn, emphasizing short bursts as well as improvisational runs. Either through Brown's encouragement or on his own initiative, Dunn constructed a sound system to amplify his steel guitar for the large dance halls that the Musical Brownies began playing. Despite the availability of primitive electric guitars on the market, Dunn opted to amplify his acoustic Gibson model with a pickup attached to an amplifier. Seeking a more brilliant tone, Dunn magnetized the strings as well in an effort to further emulate jazz instruments. Kevin Coffey describes the resultant sound: "(Dunn's) tone and phrasing was very trumpetlike and when he sailed into the upper registers he sounded at moments uncannily like Louis Armstrong replicated on steel; at others, he sounded more like a trombonist." The combination of

¹⁷ Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 158; Mark Humphrey, "Playboy Days, Part II: Eldon Shamblin Talking to Mark Humphrey," Old Time Music No. 24 (Spring 1977): 17.

amplification and improvisational playing established by Dunn quickly became the standard among Texas swing bands shortly after he joined the Musical Brownies. Some musicians, such as Leon McAuliffe, took the two tenets and applied them to a more Hawaiian-based steel guitar playing, while others, like Floyd Tillman and Leo Raley, incorporated the new style into single-string leads on formerly acoustic guitars and mandolins. Amazingly, Dunn, Tillman, and Raley all gathered in Houston in March of 1939 for a series of sessions that showcased the progressive sounds of the Southwest as well as Dunn's prominence and versatility.¹⁸

In many respects, the March 1939 session marked the apex of Dunn's prominence and the creative zenith of the Milton Brown school of western swing. Following Brown's death in 1936, Texas swing remained dominated by the Brown sound, largely due to the performances of Brownie alumni in the Houston area. Several musicians who worked with Brown at various times fronted their own bands after the leader's death, most notably Cliff Bruner, Leon Selph, and Dunn. The group that recorded as Dunn's Vagabonds at the 1939 session included, among others, Moon Mullican (on piano and vocals), Leo Raley (on amplified mandolin), and Dunn himself (on steel guitar and occasional vocals). With the absence of a fiddler and the addition of drums, Bob Dunn's Vagabonds produced by far the most progressive

¹⁸ Kevin Coffey, "Bob Dunn: Steel Colossus," Journal of Country Music Vol. 17, No. 2 (1995): 47-51; Rich Kienzle, "Steel," Country Music, Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 1976): 38; Rich Kienzle, "The Electric Guitar in Country Music: Its Evolution and Development," Guitar Player Vol. 13, No. 11 (November 1979): 30; Kevin Coffey, "The Bob Dunn Story," Western Swing Society Music News Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1997): 7; Kevin Coffey, Cliff Bruner and his Texas Wanderers (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1997) 19-20.

string-band sound of the time, displaying little if any likeness to a country music group. The musical interplay between Mullican's bluesy vocals and piano playing, Raley's amplified single-string leads, and Dunn's jazzy steel guitar bursts created a sound a decade ahead of its time. Somewhere between jazz and blues, the Vagabonds' sound epitomized southwestern musical progressivism. The intended audience was urban in residence and avant-garde in mindset. As such, Dunn's group offers everything from blues ("Mean Mistreater") to jazz ("It Must Be Love") to pop ("Blue Skies"). Remarkably, they succeed at all levels. The group shifted to more popular-orientated material on subsequent sessions (in September 1939 and the spring of 1940) because Mullican's departure early in 1940 took away most of the band's blues element. Only the relentless "Stompin' at the Honky Tonk" bares a glimpse of the group's early dynamism. After serving in the Navy in World War II, Dunn returned to the Southwest, appearing with and fronting a number of western swing and pop-orientated jazz bands before drifting into semi-retirement around 1950. In the late thirties in general and at the first Vagabonds' recording session in particular, Dunn demonstrated the artistic potential of amplified steel guitar. No instrumentalist ever so conspicuously intertwined the sounds of country music and jazz.¹⁹

Leon Selph led another group at the March 1939 sessions. Dunn, Raley, and Mullican all appeared as members of the Blue Ridge Playboys. Selph initially formed the group with a different lineup around 1936, when he began appearing regularly on Texas radio. An accomplished violinist and graduate of the Houston Conservatory,

¹⁹ Coffey, "Bob Dunn: Steel Colossus," 53-55.

Selph drifted into country music after recognizing its economic potential. He first gained an appreciation in his youth, listening to his breakdown-playing uncle. After a stint with W. Lee O'Daniel's Light Crust Doughboys in the early thirties, Selph spent some time in Dallas/Fort-Worth, playing with both Bob Wills and Milton Brown. After Wills' departure for Tulsa, Selph moved back to his hometown of Houston and formed the band that became the Blue Ride Playboys. The incarnation began as a heavily Brown-influenced group with the notable exception of Floyd Tillman's lead-guitar playing. On the 1939 session, Tillman's unique half-spoken, half-singing vocal approach further differentiated the group from the Brown legacy, although Dunn's and fiddler Cliff Bruner's solos bore the Brownie trademark. Tillman's plaintive singing and songwriting contributions to the 1939 sessions lent a considerable country feel to the recordings, with both Dunn and Mullican appropriately more restrained in their playing. After the departure of Tillman and Dunn, (sometime around 1940) Selph took charge of the band's musical direction. While the Brownie influenced-sound remained in the steel guitar and piano parts, Selph's fiddling demonstrated more emphasis on melody than on improvisation, lending more of a pop than jazz feel to the sessions. The addition of an accordion player and even more emphasis on single-string electric guitar leads in 1941 moved the group further from the Milton Brown sound. Just as Bob Dunn drifted increasingly to jazz, Selph inclined toward more commercial and dance material. The group disbanded at the beginning of World War II, with Selph taking a job with the Houston fire department before enlisting in the

Navy. He continued to play occasionally after the war, but did not perform regularly until after his retirement from the municipal service in the early 1970s.²⁰

Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers represent a third offshoot of Milton Brown's mid-thirties supergroup. Like Selph and Dunn, Bruner also envisioned a brand of Texas swing more receptive to improvisation than folk music traditionalism. Throughout the late thirties and forties, Bruner consistently challenged members of his group to produce extemporaneous solos that showcased their abilities more than they adhered to a song's melody. Ironically, Bruner, Selph and Dunn, all musicians known for their impromptu style of playing, recorded for Decca Records' Dave Kapp, a man notorious for his insistence on musicians following melody. He even went so far as to place a statue of an Indian with a sign around its neck reading "Where's the Melody?" in the Decca lobby to remind musicians of the company's policy. Commenting on Kapp's rule of thumb, Variety noted that "this (policy) particularly applies to some of his swing bands who like to get lost in improvisation, arranged or interpolated, instead of playing a tune as written." Kapp soon found out after signing Bruner in 1937 that there was no way of containing the talented fiddler or his band. Virtually unsurpassed in his command of the long-bow fiddling style, Bruner could turn any type of song played at any pace into a fiddling tour de force. He particularly excelled when in the presence of like-minded musicians like Dunn, Mullican, and Raley. As the youngest graduate of the Milton Brown school of western swing, Bruner kept its leader's spirit

²⁰ Leon Selph interview.

alive long after other stylistic modifications eclipsed the jazz-based configuration in popularity.²¹

Bruner took up fiddling around the age of four, eventually embarking on a career as a musician when his family moved to the Houston area in the early thirties. As Bruner points out, the allure of traveling and playing proved irresistible to the talented teenager: "(I) started playing the old country dances that we used to have, with the corn meal on the floor. I never did pick cotton or raise watermelon and I found out I could make more playing my fiddle than I could doing that." Performing across the state of Texas with a variety of musicians, Bruner augmented his preference for popular and jazz music with a knowledge of a variety of playing styles. By the time he joined Milton Brown in the summer of 1935 (at the age of twenty), he was already one of Texas' most proficient fiddlers. Returning to Houston after Brown's death, Bruner contacted Leo Raley, a musician he encountered during his rambling days. Taking a cue from Dunn and Tillman, Raley soon found a way to amplify his mandolin for the large dance halls utilizing Ted Daffan's knowledge of electronics in acquiring a electric pick-up:

I had a little Vol-U-Tone amplifier. Ted rigged me up a little old pick-up...You couldn't buy them in them days...And the damn thing worked. They

²¹ Floyd Tillman, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 13 October 1986, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Russell Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven: The American Popular Music Business in the Twentieth Century (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996) 137; "Jack Kapp Teases Boys on Melody," Variety Vol. 148, No. 5 (7 October 1942): 68.

heard that! I'd get up there on that bandstand. Everybody stood up and I'd jump around and slap on that 'A' string---make that mandolin go 'zip'!

Carrying on the Brown tradition of having a small band with a big sound, Bruner eventually enlisted pounding pianist Moon Mullican, string bassist Russell Vernon "Hezzie" Bryant, rhythm guitarist/vocalist Dickie McBride, a tenor banjo player and Dunn himself for his pre-war version of the Texas Wanderers.²²

The group's first sessions in 1937 (with Dunn and Mullican) reflect Bruner still in the shadow of Milton Brown. Amid pop-tinged numbers and Brown covers, Bruner adds improvisational flourishes to such songs as "Red Lips--Kiss My Blues Away" and "Truckin' on Down." Raley's newfangled electric mandolin becomes the focus of attention on "I Saw Your Face in the Moon" and especially "Beaumont Rag" and McBride's velvety baritone highlights several numbers as well. The addition of Dunn and Mullican (some time in 1938) shifted the group's focus, with Dunn's improvisational bursts, in particular, adding a jazz feel to the band's musical approach. "Ease My Worried Mind" is somewhat reminiscent of the southeastern country blues sound, but when played at the volume of the Texas Wanderers it becomes peculiarly Texas swing. Never in need of any amplification whatsoever, Mullican's piano playing steers the group in a blues direction, while Bruner and Dunn pull it back to a jazz/blues center. Bruner's fiddling adds a country element missing from the Vagabonds' sessions, although contemporary listeners east of the Mississippi would

²² Kevin Coffey, Cliff Bruner and His Texas Wanderers, 1-10; Cliff Bruner quoted in *ibid.*, 3; Leo Raley quoted in *ibid.*, 7.

challenge the notion that anything the Texas Wanderers ever recorded during this period falls into the country category. The groups' version of "Star Dust" (from September 1939) aptly demonstrates how much closer its sound was to pop and jazz than country. Only Mullican's barrelhouse playing and down-home vocal reels in the band's urban eclecticism.²³

Whether through Kapp's encouragement or Bruner's desire to reach a wider audience, the group's recordings from 1944 show a definite shift to a less jazzy, more streamlined sound. The addition of saxophone and drums coupled with the absence of Dunn and Raley move the band closer to contemporary swing bands (e.g. "You Always Hurt the One You Love"). Mullican's solos also reflect a more toned down approach. In his post-war recordings, Bruner continued to flirt with pop while allowing himself more room for displaying his multi-faceted fiddling capabilities. Bruner's style, in fact, meshes nearly as well with the pop material as it does with his pre-war jazz/blues work, an indication of the breadth of his versatility as a fiddler.

Unlike most of the post-war western swing combos, Bruner opted to maintain a small, string-based group without multiple fiddle or brass sections. He also remained in Texas (for both personal and professional reasons) after most groups fled to California. Having moved to Beaumont shortly after forming the Texas Wanderers in 1937, Bruner profited from the city's wartime and post-war expansion. Primarily a working class area more receptive to dance bands than Houston, the tri-cities of Beaumont-Port Arthur-Orange (known as the Golden Triangle) offered Bruner the

²³ Coffey, Cliff Bruner and His Texas Wanderers, 52-58.

opportunity to stay in one place and still make a fairly lucrative living. Remaining in Texas also afforded Bruner insulation from the musical winds of change blowing from the West Coast that fundamentally altered the branch of string-band swing coming out of Texas.

After the war, practitioners of the country swing sound based in California eclipsed the Milton Brown alumni in musical influence and dance-hall drawing power. In doing so, they turned the Golden State into one of the focal points of country music's post-war development, for a time rivaling if not surpassing Nashville in prominence. California country, with all its progressive sounds and magnetic showmanship, offered musicians and listeners an urban alternative to which they continued to perceive as the rustic sounds coming out of the Southeast. In taking Texas swing to the West Coast and embellishing it with sophisticated touches and glossy instrumentation, California performers moved the sub-genre closer to popular music and further from the Wills-Brown country-blues-jazz hybrid. Eventually, they stripped the music of nearly all of its country hallmarks, detaching it from its Texas roots and in doing so left it to wither in the vacillations of pop music trends. For a time, however, they ruled the West Coast and gave Grand Ole Opry performers a run for their money as country music's most prominent figures.²⁴

California western swing owed much of its post-war rise in prominence to two irrepressible forces: westward migration and promoter Foreman Phillips. The

²⁴ Coffey, Cliff Bruner and His Texas Wanderers, 8-9; Nick Tosches, "The Grand Tour," Journal of Country Music Vol. 16, No. 3 (1994): 24.

migration of southerners from Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas began in earnest following the dust storms of the early 1930s, but reached phenomenal heights in the late thirties and early forties. Between April 1940 and October of 1941, the population of Los Angeles increased by 150,000, with southerners accounting for a good portion of the rise. The war accelerated this trend, with many migrants seeking jobs in aircraft plants. Consequently, the population of California rose from seven million in 1940 to nine million in 1945. During this period and after the war, promoters and radio station executives began to recognize the profitability of booking country performers for radio broadcasts and dances. Country songs suddenly appeared on thousands of jukeboxes in the Los Angeles area. KXLA began broadcasting an ever-increasing amount of the music, eventually becoming the nation's first twenty-four hour country station in the late 1940s. Dick Schofield, program director at KXLA, explains the impetus for this phenomenon: "At that time at least eighty-five percent of the population of Los Angeles had migrated there from the Midwest and South. So there was a great demand for this music that we were supplying." Wartime migrants could turn to radio and jukeboxes for country music, but many preferred the social interaction that the dancehalls provided. Thousands of workers packed the halls in their off-hours, and on the weekend, crowds literally reached illegal proportions. In Oakland, the fire department forced a ballroom to close its box office after it sold 7,000 tickets to a Bob Wills performance in the summer of 1944. Almost overnight, country music became big business in California. In Los

Angeles, one promoter rose above all others in his ability to book country shows that packed the ballrooms.²⁵

Foreman Phillips' ascension as southern California's most successful promoter began on June 26, 1942, the night he opened the long vacant Venice Ballroom on Venice Pier, for the Los Angeles County Barn Dance. At the time, Phillips had several popular programs on Los Angeles' KRKD, including The Western Hit Parade, a show gauging the popularity of songs based on listeners mail. The inaugural Los Angeles County Barn Dance brought in a crowd of 4,200; Phillips' booking of Bob Wills the following week drew 6,200. Other popular acts included Texas Jim Lewis, Patsy Montana, and the Sons of the Pioneers. For atmosphere, Phillips reconstructed the ballroom in a western motif, with large blowups of popular western entertainers hanging on the walls and a heavy wooden fence placed in front of the bandstand. Initially, Phillips sold tickets from a stagecoach, but with crowds averaging over 6,000 a night he soon replaced the stagecoach with four ticket windows. On the success of the Venice ballroom, Phillips opened three others in the area, in Compton, Baldwin Park, and Culver City. In the mid-1940s, it was not unusual for Phillips' ballrooms to bring in between twenty and thirty thousand on weekends. With defense industries working around the clock, Phillips' clubs remained open well into the pre-dawn hours,

²⁵ Carl Abbott, The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) 103; Mary A. Bufwack, Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993) 129; "Hillbilly Disks Pull Most Nickels, Calif. Juke Ops Say," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 36 (2 September 1944): 62; Dick Schofield quoted in Richard P. Stockdell, "The Evolution of the Country Radio Format," Journal of Popular Culture Vol. 16, No. 4 (Spring 1983): 147.

with popular acts like Ray Whitley and Al Dexter working from eight in the evening till midnight at one location and midnight till four in the morning at another.

Recalling his days as a musician in several groups contracted with Phillips, Merle Travis notes that bands maintained the hectic schedule "cause the people who worked in the factories would get off at midnight and they'd (feel) cheated (if they) had to just go home." Phillips' ballrooms remained a staple on the Los Angeles area scene throughout the forties before his retirement in 1952. At the height of western swing's popularity, Foreman Phillips reigned as western swing's greatest dance hall promoter.²⁶

Audiences at Phillips' ballrooms and western swing dances in general came to forget their everyday worries and to socialize. Describing the nature of western swing, Leon McAuliffe points out that "our music is designed to make forget about realistic things." Western swing bands accomplished this purpose by focusing on light-hearted lyrics and music that kept dancehall patrons dancing. Primarily a dance-orientated phenomenon, western swing performers rarely delved in lyrics of a serious nature. Over half of the recorded output between 1939 and 1954 of western swing most

²⁶ Nat Green, "Fantastic Grosses With Folkshows," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book (New York: Billboard Publishing Co., Inc., 1944) 344-345; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 34 (9 August 1944): 67; "American Folk Tunes and Tunesters," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 42 (16 October 1943): 65; Billie Green, "Foreman Phillips," Bill Boyd Ranch House News Vol. 5, No. 3 (March 1947): 15; Cliffie Stone, "Western Dances Still Drawing Especially in Southern California," Capitol News Vol. 4, No. 10 (October 1946): 14; Merle Travis, interview with Douglas B. Green, 17 October 1975, n.p., Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Gerald F. Vaughn, "Foreman Phillips: Western Swing's Kingmaker," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 53 (Spring 1979): 28.

significant performers dealt with subject matter in the celebratory/humorous categories (1, 7, and 10). No other sub-genre comes close in its emphasis on instrumentals, with twenty percent of the sampled output classified in category 10. The fact that less than ten percent of Texas/Western swing performers' songs centered on sentimental/serious subject matter (categories 6, 8, and 9) further accentuates the sub-genre's escapist leanings. When addressing the subject of severed relationships (categories 2, 3, and 4), performers usually offset the bluesy self-pity of lyrics with up-tempo beats and, in the case of Bob Wills particularly, vocal interjections and extended musical solos. Taking a cue from contemporary popular music, Texas and Western Swing offered its war-torn and work-wearied audience temporary relief from their concerns. Western swing performers usually accented the music's liberating purpose with cowboy outfits that further detracted listeners from everyday life. Douglas Green points out, however, that while western swing performers shared the same costuming as their singing cowboy counterparts, they did not serve the same purpose: "While they both offered escape, each one did so in a profoundly different way. One offered romance, the other commonality." Western swing performances served a social function, while singing cowboys provided only vicarious escape. In contrast to their southeastern country music counterparts, Texas and Western swing bands generally ran roughshod over traditional rural mores, displaying less affection for folkways than modern sensibilities. Blatantly hedonistic in style and urban in character, western swing appealed to transplanted southerners and other

California migrants seeking refuge from present uncertainties in communal celebration.²⁷

The bands that Foreman Phillips hired to entertain his ballroom patrons not only furnished the necessary rhythms for dancing, but created some of the most adventurous country music ever produced. While working their audiences into frenzies, the California school of western swing also shook the foundation of the Texas music that spawned it. Their rumblings eventually reverberated all the way back to Nashville, with the emerging country music industry adopting many of the innovations popularized in southern California. Together with the country-pop and country-blues artists located in the Los Angeles area after the war, practitioners of California western swing rivaled, if not surpassed, their southeastern counterparts in popularity and in doing so dramatically altered the course country music would take in the post-war period. In blending Texas fiddling with pop and jazz instrumentation, the California school built upon the Milton Brown tradition of opening the music up to urban influences. Three performers in particular, Spade Cooley, Tex Williams, and Hank Penny, successfully challenged conventional musical preconceptions and in doing so played a significant role in both western swing's and country music's modernization.

²⁷ Leon McAuliffe quoted in Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 63; Douglas B. Green, "Tumbling Tumbleweeds: Gene Autry, Bob Wills, and the Dream of the West," Country: The Music and the Musicians, eds. Paul Kingbury and Alan Axelrod (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) 109-114.

In the mid-forties, Spade Cooley virtually ruled the Los Angeles ballroom circuit as "The King of Western Swing." Though born in Oklahoma, Cooley developed a musical approach that owed less to the Southwest country swing bands than it did to contemporary pop and jazz. Unlike many of his contemporaries from Texas, Cooley insisted on tight musical arrangements, orchestrating everything from band members' solos to his own movements on stage. His musical genius lay in employing three fiddles to create a fuller, more melodic sound and in his liberal use of steel guitar solos, played by some of country music's finest instrumentalists. A string bass-drums-accordion rhythm section propel many of his tunes, most of which keep an up-tempo pace. In song selection, Cooley favored the instrumentals, in particular (with nearly forty percent of his repertoire falling into category 10), and light-hearted subject matter in general (with over seventy percent of his recorded output between 1944 and 1954 falling into categories 1, 7 and 10). With elaborate western costuming and a penchant for lyrical escapism, Cooley's band provided his audiences with what they wanted to hear: epicurean dance music. As the 1940s progressed, Cooley moved further away from country music and, in doing so, opened himself up to competition from pop acts, but at his height, in the mid-forties, Cooley's immense influence literally redefined the country swing band tradition.²⁸

Born in Oklahoma in 1910, Spade Cooley moved with his family to Oregon at an early age. In the Northwest, he studied classical cello and violin prior to his family's move to Modesto, California in 1930. By the mid-thirties, Cooley's dislike

²⁸ Ginell, Milton Brown, xxix-xxx.

for farmwork took him to Los Angeles, where he gradually earned a reputation as a talented fiddler in various western country bands, playing both live and in the studio. Working with Jimmy Wakely in the late thirties, Cooley began an association with Foreman Phillips, and when Phillips and Wakely parted ways in 1942, Cooley stepped up to front a band at the Venice ballroom. To his eight-piece band, which consisted of four guitarists, a pianist, an accordionist, a female vocalist and himself on fiddle, Cooley soon added vocalist/bassist Tex Williams. For nearly a year and a half, Cooley's band remained the featured attraction at the Venice Ballroom until a disagreement with Phillips (allegedly over his hiring of Bob Wills) prompted Cooley to lease the Riverside Rancho ballroom, where he enjoyed continued success. In September 1943, he signed with Columbia records, scoring a major hit with his first single, "Shame on You" (the second most popular country song of 1945). In March 1946, Cooley made the cover of Billboard; an accompanying story reported his drawing over 12,000 patrons a weekend at the Rancho. Later that month, he moved his act to the even larger Western Palisades (a.k.a. Santa Monica Ballroom), where he remained for the remainder of the 1940s and into the 1950s.²⁹

²⁹ Al Quaglieri, liner notes, Spadella: The Essential Spade Cooley, Columbia CD CK 57392, 1994; Rich Kienzle, "When A Country Star Turns Murderer: The Strange, Tragic Case of Spade Cooley," Country Music Vol. 5, No. 10 (July 1977): 34-38; Dunbar, From Bob Wills to Ray Benson, 67-68; Jimmy Wakely, liner notes, Spade Cooley, Columbia LP FC 37467, 1982; "Profiling the Folk Artists," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book, 364; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 201; success of "Shame On You" determined from information in Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996); "Spade Cooley: Cherokee to his Western Swing," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 9 (2 March 1946): 18; "Cooley Exits Rancho for Palisades; Spot 7-Night Op in June," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 13 (30 March 1946): 39.

Cooley's success owed a great deal to the distinctive sound he developed with arranger/accordionist Pedro DePaul and the vocal style of Tex Williams. Cooley and DePaul supplied the sophisticated sound that appealed to urbanites while Williams' plaintive vocals attracted the country crowd. Billboard described the Cooley sound in this context: "With plenty of toe-teasing incentive to his pert Western rhythms, with fiddles and electric guitar strums in the lead, the music (of) Spade Cooley's large band holds enough dance appeal for the city folk as well." With a harp, an accordion, and drums, the Spade Cooley sound could not pass for country music east of the Mississippi in the early 1940s, but the three-fiddle combo, steel guitar work of Joaquin Murphy, and Williams' presence all lent a considerable earthiness to Cooley's Columbia recordings. Essentially a large-sized string band, Cooley's mid-forties group proved capable of everything from straight pop ("I Guess I've Been Dreaming Again") to contemporary country ("Forgive Me One More Time") to adventurous jazz ("Spadella") to road-house boogie ("Oklahoma Stomp"). On most occasions, the group's playing overshadows Williams' singing, with members trading solos back and forth. Williams' vocals, however, provided an essential ingredient to Cooley's success, anchoring the group from drifting into jazzy excess and establishing its place in the country market. His departure from the band in June 1946 left a void that Cooley never successfully filled. Disenchanted with Cooley's megalomaniac tendencies, most of the band followed the lead singer to Capitol Records after his dismissal. Switching to RCA-Victor, Cooley retained the three-fiddle sound and the services of Noel Boggs (on steel guitar) and Jimmy Wyble (on electric lead), but opted

to augment his band with three horn players and four reed instrumentalists. The band/orchestra eventually increased to twenty-three pieces, with Williams replaced by more pop-orientated vocalists like Becky Warfield, Ginny Jackson, and Les Anderson. Jackson and Anderson helped turn country numbers like "Honky Tonkin" and "Hillbilly Fever" into pop swing tunes, with the horn section essentially drowning out the barely audible fiddle and steel guitar. Even closer to straight pop, "I Miss You Already," "Don't Call Me Sweetheart Any More" and "Someone Left the Golden Gate Open" demonstrate Cooley's desire to reach a wider market. Evidently, Cooley's recording company encouraged this musical direction, with Billboard reporting in 1949 that "RCA is grooming Spade Cooley away from the strict Western-hillbilly style in favor of the trend to corn-flavored pop material." Regardless of its pop inclinations, Cooley's band produced some extraordinary western swing during the RCA years, particularly on instrumental numbers like "Bogg's Boogie," "Minuet in Swing," and "Texas Star." In the midst of the square-dance craze, Cooley also released a series of old-time tunes around 1950, but his strong suit remained pop-flavored song with punchy horns and hot guitar solos ("Tailor-Made Baby," "Mountain Boys Have Fun With Mountain Girls").³⁰

Meanwhile, Cooley's career in another medium began to take off. In

³⁰ "Record Reviews," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 45 (8 November 1947): 31; Rich Kienzle, Merle Travis: Guitar Rags and a Too Fast Past (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 32; Dunbar, From Bob Wills to Ray Benson, 68; C. Phil Henderson, "Spade Cooley Defies Western Music Standards with Sensational Band," Top Hand Vol. 1, No. 4 (July 1946): 1; The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 21 (27 May 1950): cover; "Cooley Joins H.B. Pop Parade," The Billboard, Vol. 61, No. 19 (7 May 1949): 18.

June 1948, a television program broadcast from the Santa Monica Ballroom (eventually titled The Spade Cooley Show) became a huge hit in Los Angeles. For a brief period in the summer of 1951, the show was broadcast coast to coast over the CBS network. The program remained a huge success in the Los Angeles area in the early fifties, with Cooley's ballroom performances continuing to draw huge crowds as well. Billboard estimated Cooley's gross earnings in 1953 at \$220,000.³¹

Switching to Decca in early 1951, Cooley temporarily dropped the brass for a more streamlined, nine-piece group, while continuing with the same base formula. Only "Horse Hair Boogie" and a revamped version of "Swingin' the Devil's Dream" (with horns) resembled the vibrancy of his earlier work, however, and the record company eventually dropping him from the label in 1955. Competition from TV programs like The Lawrence Welk Show and I Love Lucy, diminished record sales, and poor health eventually forced Cooley into semi-retirement in the late 1950s. In the 1960s, Cooley's life ended on a tragic note. Plagued by personal and professional problems, Cooley brutally murdered his wife, Ella Mae Morse (one of western swing's first female singers), in a fit of jealous rage in March of 1961. Cooley remained imprisoned for the remainder of his life, dying of a heart attack in November 1969, three months before a scheduled

³¹ "Spade Cops TV Laurels in L. A., The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 33 (18 August 1951): 3; "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 39 (29 September 1951): 98; "Cooley Grosses 220G in 1953," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 5 (30 January 1954): 26.

parole.³²

While Cooley's career will forever be marred by a senseless act of violence, its musical legacy remains quite distinguishable. Spade Cooley successfully brought an aura of urban sophistication to country music and helped establish the genre in the large dancehalls of the West Coast. In doing so, he increased its audience and popularized several musical innovations, including multiple fiddle ensembles, the electric steel guitar, and the use of drums. More a dance band than a country band, Spade Cooley's orchestra nonetheless made an impact on the southeastern country music scene.

Equipped with most of Cooley's band, Tex Williams in the post-war era carried on many of the innovations popularized by Cooley in the early forties. Williams also adopted a brass sound, albeit more tentatively than Cooley. Williams, however, placed considerable more emphasis on vocals and in doing so brought western swing closer to mainstream country music than Cooley ever could. He also helped establish western swing as a vehicle for comedy with over one-third of his recorded output in the study period falling within category 7. Backed by one of country music's most creative bands, Tex Williams mixed humor and musical innovation to produce a brand of western swing as entertaining as it was energetic.

Born in Fayette County, Illinois in 1917, Tex Williams took up the banjo at the age of five and made his radio debut in 1930. The Depression side-tracked his hopes

³² "Cooley Exits RCA, Switches to Decca Wax," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 10 (10 March 1951): 33; Quagliar, Spadella, 8; Kienzle, "When a Country Star Turns Murderer," 34-38.

of becoming a professional performer, with he and his brothers moving to Washington state in 1934 to work as apple-pickers. While he appeared in several country music acts in the 1930s as a part-time musician, Williams's career did not really begin until he joined Cliff Goddard and his Reno Racketeers in 1940 for a tour of several states and Canada. Following the tour and a short stint with Walt Shrum's band, Williams met up with Spade Cooley in southern California.³³

In mid-1946, Capitol Records representative Cliffie Stone offered Williams a contract on the strength of his performances with Cooley. Unable to work out an arrangement with Cooley, Williams branched out on his own, with several disgruntled members of Cooley's band joining him. In the summer of 1946, the renamed Western Caravan debuted at Los Angeles' Redondo Barn, and within a few months, moved to the Palace Barn, near Glendale. Almost immediately, Williams began to integrate a good deal of comedy and showmanship into the act, as he explains:

Time was when Western dance fans were satisfied to go to a dance just to dance, but now they want to be entertained. On an average dance night of, say four actual playing hours, we give about two hours of dance music and two hours of entertainment. Most night it leans heavier toward the entertainment. Every musician...has to be a showman. He must be able to either sing, clown, or do some solo work on his particular instrument.

³³ Billie Green, "Tex Williams," Bill Boyd Ranch House News Vol. 4, No. 8 (August 1947): 9; Ken Griffis, "The Tex Williams Story," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 53 (Spring 1979): 5-7.

Williams' emphasis on showmanship and comedy provided the framework for his recorded output of the late forties and early fifties. "Smoke, Smoke, Smoke (That Cigarette)," a talking boogie written by Merle Travis, became Capitol records first million seller and spawned several musical sequels. Augmenting the Spade Cooley sound with trumpet and more background vocals, Williams created an eclectic and bouncy jazz/pop mix, perfectly suited for the group's light-hearted offerings (e.g. "Never Trust a Woman," "Suspicion"). The band also recorded several innovative instrumentals, ranging from the traditional ("Rakes of Mallow") to the experimental ("Artistry in Western Swing"). Fine solo work pervades nearly all of the Western Caravan's Capitol work, with guitarist Johnny Weis and accordionist Pedro DePaul providing several standout performances. Guest appearances by guitarists Jimmy Bryant ("Wild Card") and Joaquin Murphey ("I Lost My Gal From Memphis") also mesh well with Williams' emphasis on showmanship. The Western Caravan proved adroit at playing nearly every type of music, from slow ballads ("Castle of My Dreams", "Leaf of Love") to polkas ("Capitol Polka," "California Polka"), but up-tempo western swing remained their forte ("Crocodile Tears," "I Got Texas in My Soul").³⁴

Moving to RCA-Victor in 1951 and to Decca in 1953, Williams began introducing a fuller brass segment into the Western Caravan sound. "Money" and

³⁴ Griffis, "Tex Williams Story," 5-7; C. Phil Henderson, "Tex Williams Fronts New Co-op Band of Ex Spade Cooley Men," Top Hand Vol. 1, No. 4 (July 1946): 1; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 42 (19 October 1946): 100; Tex Williams quoted in "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 47 (23 November 1946): 106.

"Hey, Mister Cotton Picker" (from the Decca years) illustrate the relationship between western swing and rock and roll, with a crashing steel guitar and saxophone exchanging musical barbs; "Don't Call My Name" is virtually indistinguishable from early rock recordings. "Sinful" (from the RCA years) accurately captures the western swing mindset in its tale of dancers attempting to have a good time despite warnings of the sinfulness of their lively steps. Throughout the late forties and early fifties, Williams provided his listeners with danceable sounds and predominantly frivolous lyrics, all designed to entertain and keep audiences moving. Williams' success demonstrated the profitability of mixing comedy with musical prowess on the West Coast. Another California western swing performer, Hank Penny, struck a similar balance, with equally astonishing musical results.³⁵

Hank Penny grew up in Alabama, where, after learning to play banjo at an early age, he began appearing on Birmingham's WAPI at the age of fifteen. In the mid-thirties, he left for New Orleans, working at WWL. While in New Orleans, Penny heard the sounds of Milton Brown and Bob Wills coming out of the Southwest, and he immediately became infatuated with Texas swing. Recognizing the novelty of the music, Penny returned to Alabama with hopes of introducing the new sound to the Deep South while avoiding the competition in Texas and Oklahoma. The pre-war version of his Radio Cowboys differed slightly from the Texas swing bands (i.e. exclusion of piano), but he willingly adopted their jazzy up-tempo pace and carefree swagger. Penny explains the musical approach of his early bands:

³⁵ Griffis, "Tex Williams Story," 9.

Me and the Radio Cowboys were trying to do something similar to Bob Wills.

We were the only ones in the Southeast that were doing this... We were different because most of the others were playing strictly hillbilly music, and I, for one, never liked hillbilly music, per se... When we did a hillbilly song, we would make it swing.

In 1939, Penny took his sound to Atlanta's WSB, where he picked steel guitarist Noel Boggs and began fine-tuning sound.³⁶

After their confrontational encounter with Grand Ole Opry management (described in chapter one), Penny's group moved to Cincinnati and, upon Merle Travis' urging, to California near the end of the war where he started appearing on Foreman Phillips' ballroom circuit. Ever the uncompromising renegade, Penny eventually split with Phillips and soon began a very successful career on Los Angeles television, working with the likes of Spade Cooley and Cliffie Stone before starring in his own show. While in California, he continued to record western swing material, gradually adopting more of the California sounds. While regarded as a temperamental rebel by many promoters, no one could ever question his musical talents and enthusiasm for music. Over the years, he produced some of the most spirited country music ever recorded with several notable musicians.³⁷

³⁶ Rich Kienzle, "Hank Penny," Old Time Music No. 28 (Spring 1978): 5-6; Cary Ginell, liner notes, Tobacco State Swing, Rambler LP 103, 1980; Hank Penny quoted in Wayne W. Daniel, Pickin' on Peachree: A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990) 189-190.

³⁷ Kienzle, "Hank Penny," 7-10; Kienzle, Merle Travis, 22; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 26 (1 July 1950): 98.

Penny's first recordings with an early version of the Radio Cowboys took place in 1938. From the outset, Penny made clear his musical intentions: "We didn't mind sounding a little like Milton Brown or Bob Wills. We just didn't want a Nashville sound." Centered on his propulsive acoustic guitar work, Penny's early session move along with a vigor that became a trademark of the Hank Penny sound. In developing his own style Penny borrowed heavily from Texas swing stalwarts like Bill Boyd as well as Brown and Wills. The Bill Boyd string-based sound pervades on "Blue Melody" and "Yankee Doodle," while the Milton Brown influence clearly appears on numbers like "Hesitation Blues" and "She's Just That Kind." Two of Penny's early steel guitarists (Sammy Forsmark and Eddie Duncan) based their style on Bob Dunn's horn-like bursts, while Noel Boggs (with Penny in 1939 and again after the war) incorporated faster chord-style of playing. A jazz influence emerges in Sheldon Bennett's fiddling, which at times sound remarkably like a clarinet (i.e. "Back Up a Little Bit"). Penny also worked with the classically trained Boudleux Bryant in the pre-war years, giving the session an even more sophisticated sound.³⁸

After the war, Penny opened up the bands sound, incorporating an accordion, trumpet, and occasional clarinet into the mix. Working with Merle Travis, Noel Boggs, and fiddler Harold Hensley, Penny recorded several sides in mid-1945 that in many ways represent the pinnacle of his musical career. Penny proudly recalls these

³⁸ Hank Penny quoted in Ken Griffis, "Hank Penny: The Original 'Outlaw'?", John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 18, Nos. 65-66 (Spring/Summer 1982): 6; Rich Kienzle, "Steel Guitar: The Western Swing Era," Guitar Player Vol. 13, No. 12 (December 1979): 50-53.

recordings as the most commercial of his career, but they also represent an artistic zenith. "Steel Guitar Stomp" may very well be the crowning achievement of both Travis and Boggs, with both guitarists rising to the challenge the other presents. Travis' and Hensley's exceptional solos on "Two Time Mama" and Boggs' work on "When You Cry, You Cry Alone" lend credence to the session's significance. For his part, Penny offers some fine vocal performances as well as his incomparable rhythmic work. Recorded in mid-1945, the session remains an important benchmark in the development of post-war western swing, a changing of the guard in western swing's preeminence from the Texas swing band sound to the California eclectic hybrid.³⁹

Penny went on to record several other significant numbers for the King label, gradually utilizing more orchestral instruments. The steel guitar remained the centerpiece of his sound, however, played by the likes of Wesley W. "Speedy" West ("Hillbilly Bebop"), Herb Remington ("Remington Ride"), and, once on the RCA label, with Joaquin Murphy ("Tater Pie"). Penny reluctantly became typecast as a singer of comic and novelty numbers in the late forties (partly due to his role of comedian on the Spade Cooley television show), but he remained uncompromising in his preference for recording with some of southern California's finest musicians and in doing so, continued to produce vibrant western swing well into the 1950s. With a recalcitrant will and an invigorative spirit, Penny deserves recognition for his part in

³⁹ Kienzle, Merle Travis, 22.

post-war configuration of Texas and California styles.⁴⁰

Ironically, western swing became an endangered sub-genre on the West Coast soon after the California school took its identifiable form. Two discernible trends inevitably led to the demise of California western swing: the end of the big-band era and the beginning of the age of television. While not directly interconnected, these two phenomena occurred during the same period, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Several western swing bands survived the former development by downsizing and amplifying several of their remaining stringed instruments, but television's catastrophic impact proved unavoidable to all groups who counted on ballroom attendance for a significant portion of their incomes. Many performers and promoters (including Cooley, Williams, Penny and Phillips) embraced the new medium in an effort to ride the wave of its success, but the communal dancehall atmosphere did not translate well over the airwaves into people's living rooms, and they could not compete against the network shows that grew in popularity in the mid-1950s. In the end, simple economics determined the fate of western swing in the post-war period.

From its murky beginnings, western swing possessed several characteristics that linked it to contemporary pop bands, namely, its size and its lyrical orientation. Both the Texas and California schools shared these traits in the pre-war and World War II eras. They measured their success like their popular counterparts, in dance crowd turnout and, to a lesser extent, record sales. Simply put, the bigger the crowds,

⁴⁰ Rich Kienzle, "Hank Penny Discography," Old Time Music No. 28 (Spring 1978): 11-15; Alan Fischler, "Western Caravan," The Billboard Vol 61, No. 13 (26 March 1949): 17.

the bigger the band could be. By the end of the war, however, bands grew increasingly difficult to maintain, both logistically and economically. Many band members joined in the war effort, with those remaining securing larger salaries due to their demand. In July 1944, Billboard reported a substantial reduction in the number of new bands formed in 1943 and pointed toward rising costs as the culprit. After the war, the trend continued, with many bands experiencing downsizing or disbanding as a result. Simultaneously, the American public grew increasingly disenchanted with jazz-orientated big bands, with the number of hit records produced by these groups falling fifty percent in the period between 1942 and 1948. As the popularity of the dance bands decreased, the average age of their followers began to rise. Like many Americans in the postwar period, they began to settle down and start families, with many choosing to stay home on weekend nights. The void that may have existed in their source of entertainment was quickly filled by the emerging television industry, which offered an inexpensive, comfortable alternative to going out to a dance.⁴¹

Television made a revolutionary impact on American society in general and western swing in particular. As Robert Townsend explains:

Television trained (younger Americans) to sit passively before it and consequently before music. The pre-fifties generation was active and creative

⁴¹ "Nut Cuts Number of Newies: Costly Sidemen, Arrangers, Up Infant Ork Investments," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 30 (22 July 1944): 15; Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 229; Townsend, "A Brief History of Western Swing," 41; Richard R. Peterson, Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 190.

in entertainment; that generation danced. The post-1950 generation was generally passive in entertainment.

Bob Wills' guitarist Eldon Shamblin makes a similar observation: "Back in the days when we were going strong, TV played very little part and people had to get up and do somethin', so a lot of 'em chose to go to dances. When TV came in it changed the pattern because the dance business became smaller." Television "came in" around 1949 and 1951, when sales of sets skyrocketed, partially due to a drop in prices. Between 1949 and 1951, the industry went from a twenty-five million dollar loss to a forty-one million dollar profit. In mid-1947, over half of television viewers were concentrated in the New York area, but by late 1948 Chicago and Los Angeles also became major markets. Fortunately for western swing bands in California, Los Angeles stations had yet to become affiliated with the ABC, CBS, and NBC networks, with programming remaining local. Ever the entrepreneur, Foreman Phillips appeared on Los Angeles television six days a week (six hours on weekdays, one hour on Sunday); western swing performers followed suit. Commenting on the trend, Johnny Bond (a member of one of Foreman Phillips' contracted bands, notes that "a performer who ignored the new tube, with its grainy reception, risked certain obscurity."⁴²

⁴² Townsend, "A Brief History of Western Swing," 43; Eldon Shamblin quoted in Mark Humphrey, "Playboy Days, Part III: Eldon Shamblin Talking to Mark Humphrey," Old Time Music No.25 (Summer 1977): 25; Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven, 312; "Tele Audience Now 325,000: Viewer Total Goes Up 600% in Two Years," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 27 (5 July 1947): 1, 19; "3 Out of 10 Now Watch TV: Figures Show 2-Yr Growth as Fantastic," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 45 (6 November 1948): 1, 14; Merle Travis, "Recollections of Merle Travis, 1944-1955, Part 2," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 55 (Fall 1979):

Western swing performers found themselves between a rock and a hard place, knowing that television was cutting in on their crowds but unable to ignore it. As a sign of the clouds on the horizon, Billboard reported in early 1949 that television increased the number of stay-at-home night of set owners in the Los Angeles area by sixty-eight percent. The onset of the Korean War further diminished dance hall crowds. Facing extinction, western swing bands reacted in various ways. Some mixed contemporary pop sounds with steel guitars, seeking to expand their record sales. Those who chose this route eventually fell victim to becoming indistinguishable from their popular counterparts, not twangy enough for the country fans and too folkish for urbanites. Others downsized their bands and began exploring ways to hold on to their core audience. Leading the way, Bob Wills determined that western swing would not go down without a fight.⁴³

The first stage of Bob Wills' career effectively ended shortly after the onset of World War II. His large band scattered in various directions, many joining the armed forces or taking defense jobs. Thirty-eight years old, Wills found himself conscripted in the United States Army in December 1942. The mismatch of the free-spirited entertainer and the Army soon became apparent, leading to Wills' discharge the following summer. Reorganizing a band in Tulsa, he left for California in September,

140; Johnny Bond, Reflections: The Autobiography of Johnny Bond (Los Angeles: John Edwards Memorial Foundation, 1976).

⁴³ "If You Own a TV Set in the Los Angeles Area You Go to Movies 25% Less Often, Survey Determines," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 9 (26 February 1949): 1; Lucky Moeller, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 20 November 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

eventually putting together a twenty-two-piece orchestra in early 1944. In Oakland, he outgrossed big band icons like Harry James, the Dorseys, and Benny Goodman at the city's Civic Auditorium. In all parts of the state he drew enormous crowds, often breaking attendance records. A journalist in the Fresno area captured the atmosphere of a Bob Wills appearance in Tulare:

Bob played until almost 1:30 A.M. The crowd applauded, screamed and cheered all evening. When he finally stopped the music, at least 1,500 people (of an estimated 2,300) were still on hand, cheering and applauding...Entire families listened to Bob Wills and the lads. Little boys and girls, old men and women, young folks--they were dancing, cavorting, shouting, yelling, enjoying every minute. Mothers carried babies in their arms. I never in my life saw such happy people at a public dance.

Understating the obvious, Billboard noted that "Bob Wills has caught on" in a favorable review of a Playboys' performance at the Aragon Ballroom in Ocean Park.⁴⁴

Despite all the success, Wills was unable to keep his large, brass-fronted band. When the laws of supply and demand eventually caught up to him, it became economically infeasible to retain twenty or so musicians. He also realized that a large segment of his crowds preferred a more string-based approach. Sometime in late 1944 or early 1945, he downsized to nine band members. The addition of Noel Boggs and

⁴⁴ Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 225, 228-229, 236; "Hillbilly Band Tops Swing Kings on Coast," Variety Vol. 153, No. 7 (26 January 1944): 45; Nat Green, "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 40 (30 September 1944): 66; "On the Stand: Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 30 (22 July 1944): 26.

electric guitarist Jimmy Wyble helped to fill the void somewhat, with both musicians capable of producing the full sound necessary to fill the large dance halls. In January 1945, the group entered Columbia's Hollywood studios for a series of sessions that featured its new string-based sound. In the absence of a full brass and reed section, Wills' band clearly sounded more country than it did before the war, creating sophisticated folk music, a blend of blues, jazz, and country. The group fused the genres effortlessly, particularly on numbers like "Texas Playboy Rag" and "Roly Poly." Boggs' full-bodied solo on "Smoke on the Water" marked the beginning of a new era in steel guitar playing, one dominated in the immediate post-war years by the aggressive West Coast style. The group continued the sophisticated folk formula at two sessions in September and October of 1946. By this time, two stringed sections fronted the band, one consisting of Bob Wills, Jesse Ashlock, and Joe Holley on fiddles, and a guitar triumvirate made up of Herb Remington on steel, Lester "Junior" Barnard on electric lead, and Tiny Moore on electric mandolin. The addition of Moore cemented the Wills post-war sound, increasingly centered around amplified guitar solos. Many of the Playboys of this period displayed an affinity for jazz music in their playing, but Bob Wills never let his band drift too far from the folk and blues music that he grew up with in Texas. Lyrically, Wills embraced his country roots in songs like "Sugar Moon" and "Can't Get Enough of Texas," both replete with rural imagery. The addition of Bernard and Moore re-established the bluesy side of the band. Bernard's work on "Brain Cloudy Blues" resembles post-war African American blues more than it does jazz, as does Moore's electric mandolin work on several other

numbers.⁴⁵

In 1946, the group relocated to Fresno and began making transcriptions for the Tiffany Music Corporation. The Tiffany transcriptions (recorded between March of 1946 and December of 1947) offer a glimpse of the Texas Playboys at their finest, performing in a live, spontaneous atmosphere. Anyone doubting that western swing provided the spirit for rock and roll need only listen to these recordings to be convinced. With a combustible chemistry, the band piles through its vast repertoire of folk, blues, and jazz material, with Wills providing the fuel for the fire, encouraging band members with his patented vocal interjections and determining the songlist, often on the spot. As fiddler Joe Holley explains, "(The Tiffany transcriptions) were unique because Bob did not rehearse the band. We simply set up and played as if it was a dance. Everything was spontaneous--in Bob's words, 'not cut and dried.'" The Playboys reach a dizzying peak on ferocious numbers like "My Window Faces the South," "Nobody's Sweetheart Now," "I'm a Ding-Dong Daddy," and "Fat Boy Rag." They also produce some outstanding blues numbers (e.g. "Blackout Blues," "Milkcow Blues," and "Cotton Patch Blues") and revamp several traditional numbers, including "Sally Gooden" and "Get Along Home Cindy" in modern arrangements. Wills also demonstrates his new string-based group's ability to play hot jazz on reworkings of "Jumpin' at the Woodside" and "Take the 'A' Train." The Tiffany Transcriptions show Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys at their finest, funneling their individual talents into

⁴⁵ Bob Pinson, "Bob Wills Discography," San Antonio Rose 339-359.

one dynamic whole. Unable to swing with horns, Wills chose to tremble with strings. Along with many of his pre-war recordings, the Tiffany transcriptions cast Bob Wills as one of American music's most creative forces.⁴⁶

In the process of recording for the Tiffany Company, the Playboys relocated their home base to Sacramento in 1947, transmitting over 50,000 watt KFBK. Growing tired of touring, Wills purchased a ballroom site, renamed it Wills Point, and established a resort, complete with a dance hall, swimming pool, and amusement park. In the meantime, Wills signed with MGM Records, and the Texas Playboys recorded their first sides for the label in the fall of 1947. Much of the spirit of the Tiffany transcriptions carried over into these sessions, albeit a bit more contrived in the semi-formal studio setting. The first number recorded at the session, an instrumental entitled "Silver Lake Blues," resembled the transcriptions' freewheeling style. With "Dog House Blues" and "Blues for Dixie," the band produced some fine blues while "Playboy Chimes" and "Papa's Jumpin'" featured the returning Eldon Shamblin working with Remington and Moore to play jazz-tinged numbers. Shamblin's return (as musician and arranger) tightened up the group's sound, with multiple fiddle and guitar parts featured on solos. The real star of the session, however, was vocalist Tommy Duncan, who reached his peak around this time period as country music's most versatile singer (i.e. "Still Water Runs Deepest," "Blues for Dixie.").

⁴⁶ Joe Holley, liner notes, The Tiffany Transcriptions, Vol. 5, Edsel CD 325, 1986; Kienzle, Bob Wills, 15.

Unfortunately, just as the Playboys were reaching a creative summit they began to disintegrate.⁴⁷

Hampered by personal problems, Wills began missing several tour dates, much to the chagrin of band members who often faced disappointed crowds. In September 1948, Duncan and Wills parted ways after sixteen years together. Coupled with the rise of television, this event rang the deathknell for western swing's influence on country music. From the outset, the Texas Playboys were always more about chemistry than musical talent, with Duncan and Wills providing the country ground for the groups jazzy adventurousness. Duncan's unassuming vocal style and Wills' uninhibited personality complemented one another, producing just the right amount of restrained enthusiasm that made the band's musical energy all the more inflammable, yet never immoderate. Replacement vocalists in the band possessed neither Wills' and Duncan's shared appreciation for Texas folk music nor the former lead singer's effortlessly convincing manner. The addition of Johnny Gimble, with his bluesy amplified fiddle style, along with Wills' tired, yet relentless spirit helped save the group from the freefall that awaited many of western swing bands in the early 1950s, but the spark that ignited the band's music gradually disappeared. The Texas Playboys continued to make great music in the late forties and early fifties, particularly on numbers like "End of the Line," "Texas Blues," and a reworking of "Sittin' on Top of

⁴⁷ Kienzle, Bob Wills, 15; Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 253; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 34 (21 August 1948): 31; Jonny Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose: The Life and Career of Rose Maddox (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1997) 94.

the World," but the group's roots to traditional folk sources eroded, no doubt partially attributable to the onslaught of honky-tonk and later, rock music. After Duncan's departure, Wills returned to the Southwest, first to Oklahoma City (in 1949) and then to Dallas (in 1950) before beginning a series of moves back and forth from the West Coast to Texas in the mid-fifties. In the Southwest, Bob Wills' notoriety remained undaunted in that late 1940s and early 1950s, but the crowds that came out to see his band gradually became smaller.⁴⁸

On his own, Tommy Duncan encountered similar problems. Duncan formed most of his musical identity with Wills, whom he worked with since his early twenties. As a youngster growing up in West Texas, Duncan developed an affection for country life and Jimmie Rodgers records, gradually becoming interested in dance music and the pop warblings of Bing Crosby. Wills hired him in August of 1933 as both a singer and piano player, but Duncan's talents clearly lay in the former pursuit, and when Wills hired pianist Al Stricklin in 1935, Duncan soon became the featured lead vocalist of the band. With Wills, Duncan recorded numerous memorable vocal performances in a variety of musical settings. Adapting to Wills' chameleonic musical nature, Duncan sang hot swing ("Get With It," "Oozlin' Daddy Blues"), pop ("I Found a Dream," "Waltz You Saved for Me"), and old-time country ("Ida Red," "Lil' Liza Jane"), but he excelled at bluesy material ("I Ain't Got Nobody," "Empty Bed Blues")

⁴⁸ Rich Kienzle, Papa's Jumpin': The MGM Years of Bob Wills (Bremen: Bear Family Records, 1985) 6-8, 11-13; Greg Drust, liner notes, Tommy Duncan: For the Last Time, Longhorn LP LH 1237; Townsend, San Antonio Rose, 254-265; Joe Carr and Alan Munde, Prairie Night to Neon Lights: The Story of Country Music in West Texas (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995) 62-63.

and Jimmie Rodgers' covers ("Mississippi Delta Blues," "Mean Mama Blues").

Duncan could yodel, croon, lilt, or bellow, depending on the musical mood, exhibiting a vocal dexterity unrivaled among his contemporary country peers. As his voice matured, it became even more evocative, developing a weathered texture that gave his performances an even greater aura of authenticity. In a sub-genre dominated by musicians, Duncan established the human voice as one of its most versatile instruments.⁴⁹

When Duncan and Wills split in 1948, the singer soon formed his own band, made up of refugees from the Texas Playboys and Spade Cooley's orchestra. With Noel Boggs, Cameron Hill, and Jimmy Wyble as guitarists, Ocie Stockard and Joe Holley as fiddlers, and Millard Kelso on piano, Duncan appropriately named the group the Western All-Stars. Songs like "You Put Me on My Feet (When You Took Her off My Hands)" featured some great instrumental work, but from the start, the band revolved around Duncan's vocals. With "Gambling Polka Dot Blues," "In the Jailhouse Now," and "Never No More Blues," Duncan delivered some extraordinary vocal performances, but the musical chemistry never developed. Eventually, the Spade Cooley defectors returned to their old boss and, in 1950, sagging record sales led to Capitol Records' dismissal of Duncan. Signing with Intro Records in 1951, Duncan formed a new band and adopted a more mainstream approach, experimenting with background singers and a steel guitar-less lineup. "Wrong Road Blues" and "Mississippi Delta Blues" demonstrated just how great a blues singer Duncan could

⁴⁹ Rich Kienzle, liner notes, Texas Moon, Bear Family CD BCD 15907, 1996.

be, while "Relax and Take It Easy" and "Move a Little Bit Closer" illustrated Duncan's flair with up-tempo numbers. One of his finest vocal appearances came in January 1953, recording four bluesy numbers with a makeshift band. Duncan switched record labels again around 1954, moving to Coral, but only "Walkin' in the Shadow of the Blues" rivaled his earlier performances. Eventually, Wills and Duncan teamed up again briefly in the early 1960s, with a new version of the Texas Playboys. The reunion proved short-lived, however, with Duncan once again touring as a solo act before succumbing to a heart attack in 1967. As western swing's most accomplished singer, Tommy Duncan set the precedent of versatility for all vocalists in the sub-genre that followed.

Nearly as influential as a western swing instrumentalist was Leon McAuliffe, Bob Wills' steel guitarist in the thirties and early 1940s. Together with Bob Dunn, McAuliffe introduced the steel guitar to thousands of impressionable young musicians. Born in the Houston area in 1917, McAuliffe learned to play guitar at an early age, first playing a standard flattop but soon switching to a model with a metal resonator that produced more volume. As a teenager, he played on the radio and at root beer stands and parties around the Houston area. He soon became intrigued with the Milton Brown sound, travelling to Fort Worth occasionally to see the band. McAuliffe established a rapport with Dunn, and the legendary steel guitarist eventually let the youngster sit in for him when he took breaks. In 1933 (at the age of sixteen), he joined the Light Crust Doughboys after Bob Wills left the group. In 1935, Wills found himself without a steel guitarist and invited the young McAuliffe to join his

band in Tulsa. Fascinated with the Bob Dunn amplified sound, McAuliffe convinced Wills to invest in an electronic setup similar to Dunn's. McAuliffe's guitar eventually became an integral part of the Bob Wills' sound, particularly after the release of "Steel Guitar Rag" in late 1936. Derived from an Hawaiian tune, McAuliffe turned the instrumental piece into country music's first steel guitar standard. He also emerged as a capable vocalist, featured on some of the group's up-tempo pop numbers like "Lyla Lou" and "Oh! You Pretty Woman," but it was McAuliffe's steel guitar playing that established his presence in country music. According to Al Stricklin, McAuliffe's instrument was the most popular among dance crowds who came out to see the Playboys. As his playing style matured, McAuliffe began using volume controls to produce a swelling, "doo-wah" effect later adopted by many prominent steel guitarists in the forties. With the coming of World War II, McAuliffe left Wills to join the Navy, and upon returning, decided to embark on a solo career.⁵⁰

McAuliffe initially organized a modern dance band after returning to Tulsa, a large twelve-piece outfit, but the group's emphasis on popular numbers failed to impress southwesterners well aware of McAuliffe's musical background. He then downsized the band to eight, converted it to a western swing outfit, and began playing on 50,000 watt KVOO, advertising his dance hall appearances. McAuliffe soon developed a huge following in the area, with crowds responding favorably to a sound

⁵⁰ Leon McAuliffe interview; Kienzle, "Steel Guitar: The Western Swing Era," 48-52; Bob Pinson, Leon McAuliffe and His Western Swing Band; Sonya Colberg, "'Mr. Steel Guitar' Leon McAuliffe Dies at Age 71 After Long Illness," Tulsa World, 21 August 1988; Stricklin, My Years With Bob Wills, 100-101; John W. Rumble, Roy Acuff (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1983) 19.

centered around his steel guitar playing, twin fiddles, and a small horn section.

Picking up Eldon Shamblin for a time in 1946, the Cimarron Boys signed with Majestic Records.⁵¹

The group's Majestic releases reflected McAuliffe's fondness for experimentation. As he recalls, "we were playing dance music. We were playing...with horns, we were playing with drums...we were changing keys. We were playing with vocal backgrounds...I don't think there's a thing in modern music that we weren't playing." With an eagerness to improvise, McAuliffe added bluesy saxophone solos to "Steel Guitar Rag" and "A Plain Talking Man from the West," and flirted with boogie rhythms on "T-U-L-S-A Straight Ahead" and "The Covered Wagon Rolled Right Along." A high point of his tenure with Majestic, "Twin Guitar Boogie" offered some great instrumental work from McAuliffe and Shamblin, but the sound had yet to coalesce. In February 1949, McAuliffe (now without Shamblin) signed with Columbia, recording several numbers that mixed pop and western sounds to great effect. Not surprisingly, the band excelled on tunes centered on McAuliffe's steel guitar playing, including the popular "Panhandle Rag" and "Blue Guitar Stomp." The band also excelled at bluesy numbers that featured the guitar work of Robert Kiser and the Cimarron Boys' horn section (e.g. "I've Never Lived in Tennessee," "Somebody Else is Beating My Time"). In the early 1950s, legendary fiddler Cecil Brower joined

⁵¹ Leon McAuliffe interview; biographical information for Leon McAuliffe compiled from Leon McAuliffe Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Pinson, Leon McAuliffe and His Western Swing Band; Humphrey, "Playboy Days, Part I," 15.

the group, injecting a dose of jazz into numbers like "Hear Me Now" and "Redskin Rag." Gradually, however, the Cimarron Boys drifted closer to popular music and mainstream country. The group remained quite capable of producing great music, particularly on instrumentals like "Mr. Steel Guitar" (from 1954), but they were increasingly becoming less improvisational in their approach. Undoubtedly, this reflected the downslide in dance hall attendance that forced McAuliffe to pay more attention to record sales. For several years after the war, however, McAuliffe and his Cimarron Boys produced some of innovative western swing, daringly releasing several jazz- and blues-tinged numbers in defiance of country music's shift toward honky-tonk and pop material.⁵²

With the Texas Playboys and Bob Wills-derived groups feeling the economic pinch of dwindling dance crowds and sagging record sales and California swing bands embracing the sounds of popular music, all signs pointed to the extinction of western swing in the early 1950s. Developments in Nashville signaled the rise of the city as the country music center, further isolating western swing as a regional phenomenon. From the outset, the eclecticism of western swing entertainers clashed with the conservatism of the Grand Ole Opry, but this mattered little to performers playing to packed dancehalls thousands of miles away. Primarily dance music, western swing's success owed little to record sales or even radio for that matter. The bread and butter

⁵² Leon McAuliffe interview; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 6 (5 February 1949): 30; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 36 (4 September 1948): 31; Townsend, "A Brief History of Western Swing," 44.

of its performers remained dance hall grosses well into the 1950s. Some regionally based acts survived in pockets like west Texas, where bands led by Hoyle Nix, Billy Briggs and the Miller Brothers Band continued to draw crowds. Most major western swing acts died a slow death, constantly on the move playing to increasingly smaller audiences. Musically, many of the sub-genre's acts began to sound increasingly alike, turning more towards popular music for inspiration. Aside from Bob Wills, only one major western swing performer sought out new ways to expand his audience within the parameters of country music instrumentation. Hank Thompson essentially turned western swing inside out in his quest to survive as a country music artist without having to rely on Nashville for support. Ironically, his remarkable success marked the pinnacle of western swing's acceptance east of the Mississippi River. By relying on his own songwriting talent and holding steadfast to a smooth, full-bodied string approach, Hank Thompson survived the honky-tonk, country-pop, and rock eras by providing listeners with a unique alternative to mainstream country.⁵³

Born in 1925, Hank Thompson grew up around Waco, Texas where, as a youngster, he performed at theatre matinees playing the current country hits. After winning several local contests, he began appearing on Waco radio during his high school years. Stationed on the West Coast during World War II, Thompson gained exposure to the western swing sounds of Bob Wills and Spade Cooley, as well as developing a keen interest in the music of Ernest Tubb, who also occasionally performed in the area. After his discharge, he returned to west Texas, attending

⁵³ Carr, Prairie Nights to Neon Lights, 65-66.

college and returning to radio. He organized a band (the Brazos Valley Boys) and began appearing at schoolhouses, gradually building a following. Through a local contact, he signed with a local independent label and made his first recordings in August 1946. A self-penned number ("Whoa Sailor") drew the attention of radio mogul Hal Horton of Dallas and an acetate of "Humpty Dumpty Heart" landed him a major contract (facilitated by Tex Ritter) with Capitol Records.⁵⁴

A rudimentary sound and an Ernest Tubb vocal approach characterize Thompson's pre-Capitol recordings. Gradually, his vocal style became more assured and individualistic, developing a softer tone and reversing Tubb's emphasis on low notes and tentativeness on higher ones. At his first session for Capitol in October 1947, Thompson's distinctive sound (characterized by his new vocal approach and the use of multiple fiddle and guitar parts) began to coalesce, with "Humpty Dumpty Heart" becoming a major hit. As Thompson explains, he knew that in order to succeed he needed to come up with a fresh approach: "Back then, you looked for a style, an identifying thing that was gonna make you sound different from somebody else." Thompson's unique style cross-pollinated western swing's use of twin fiddles and electric guitars with post-war popular music's emphasis on smooth vocals and novelty lyrics. Unlike many of his western swing and pop contemporaries, he eschewed the use of horns to give the music a distinct country feel, while retaining a danceable rhythm. Thompson astutely realized that it was western swing's wall of

⁵⁴ Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 3-15; Nick Tosches, "The Hank Thompson Saga: Reflections of the King of Western Swing," Country Music Vol. 3, No. 10 (July 1975): 32-34.

sound that turned off so many traditional country music listeners, and by toning down its jazziness he drew an audience both east and west of the Mississippi River.

Stripping western swing of its musical omnipresence, Thompson drew more attention to lyrical detail, and unprecedented development in the sub-genre's history. His vocal style offered the perfect balance between western swing's cool detachment and country music's intimacy, with self-penned lyrics frivolous enough for dance crowds and earthy enough for the folk audience. Most of his pre-1955 repertoire (nearly fifty percent) centers on failed relationships, but he effectively disguises the forlornness of songs like "Waiting in the Lobby of Your Heart" and "Hangover Heart" with clever wordplay. On "The Wild Side of Life" he strikes a balance between interregional musical styles, melding a smooth vocal approach and carefully arranged sound with a traditional country tune. Possessing one of country music's most underrated voices, Thompson could convey remarkable emotiveness ("Breakin' the Rules") or careless abandon ("New Rovin' Gambler") with equal effectiveness.⁵⁵

Musically, the Brazos Valley Boys sound revolved around twin fiddles, steel guitar, drums, and (after 1952) Merle Travis' lead guitar. Thompson worked with several steel guitar players, most notably Ralph "Lefty" Nason and Wayma K. "Pee Wee" Whitewing. Nason's unique tuning and playing style set the standard for subsequent Thompson steel guitarists, while Whitewing's use of a foot pedal to adjust both volume and tone further contributed to the development of the Hank Thompson

⁵⁵ Hank Thompson quoted in Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 16, Tosches, "The Hank Thompson Saga," 32-34; Malone, Country Music, U. S. A., 227.

trademark sound. In mid-1953, Travis joined the group as lead guitarist and consultant, offering valuable advice on arrangements as well as contributing several memorable solos. The band's astonishing rendition of "Wildwood Flower" with Travis symbolized the group's eclecticism as much as it did their musical capabilities.⁵⁶

Thompson's use of drums contrasted with mainstream country music sounds coming out of Nashville. Bob Wills created quite a stir when he came to the Grand Ole Opry in late December 1944 insisting that the show's management allow his drummer to play on stage, in front of the curtain. Minnie Pearl recalls that when he later appeared with amplified fiddles "he threw the audience into a panic." Thompson made a number of guest appearances on the Opry in the latter half of 1948 (before he began using drums), rejecting a regular spot on the show mainly for financial reasons (specifically, the Opry's minimal salary and obligation to appear every Saturday night). Thompson quickly realized that remaining in Nashville would restrict him both artistically as well as financially: "I just didn't feel at home on the Nashville music scene...I didn't feel that I could have developed my music there." Thompson returned to the Southwest, drawing crowds around Texas and Oklahoma as well as making occasional trips to the West Coast. Upon the success of "Wake Up Irene," Thompson returned to the Opry, with the show's management allowing him to bring his drummer along. Thompson remained based in the Southwest throughout his career,

⁵⁶ Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 16, 22, 28; Kienzle, Merle Travis, 59.

however, enjoying the creative freedom of remaining outside the Opry orbit. His influence on mainstream country music was considerable, however, legitimizing many of the musical innovations of the Texas string bands and western swing pioneers.⁵⁷

Hank Thompson produced a brand of western swing as listenable as it was danceable. He recognized that in order to survive in the country market of the early 1950s with a western swing band he needed to stimulate listeners with appealing lyrics as well as good musicianship. During the war years, country music embraced newer sounds in an effort to attract a wider audience and in the process became infatuated with pop and western swing instrumentation. In the late forties, the pendulum swung back to the primacy of lyrics and decreased emphasis on effervescent musical frills. Country music in the Southeast espoused the amplified standard and steel guitar sounds of the Southwest but retained its pre-war penchant for sentimental and realistic lyrical subject matter. The balance of power between the West Coast and the Southeast teetered in the post-war period, but western swing increasingly played a diminished role in the battle as country-blues artists located on the West Coast stepped forward. The urban middle-class audience that the wartime Texas triumvirate and western swing drew to country music turned to these artists in the late forties and early fifties for flashy amplified sounds and light-hearted lyrics. Meanwhile, the rural

⁵⁷ Carr, Prairie Nights to Neon Lights, 62; Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 137; Minnie Pearl and Joan Dew, Minnie Pearl, An Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980) 182; Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 151-152; Hank Thompson quoted in Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 152; Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 31.

southerners that made up the majority of the pre-war audience began to reassert their influence on the genre's creative development. The war changed their lives considerably, with many moving to urban areas and taking non-farm jobs. Along with the rest of America, they put their nickels in jukeboxes and chose selections that cut through the noise of the cafes and taverns they frequented. They liked the full-bodied sounds of western swing but cared little for its light-hearted merriment. Most remained rural in mindset and working class in economic status, with many feeling uncomfortable in their new urban surroundings. They wanted to hear the music they grew up with played in a new way, with lyrics and music applicable to their current situation. Southerners who remained in or returned to rural areas preferred the older sounds, but as their number decreased so too did their impact on country music trends. Nationalization indelibly changed the identity of country music and the American South. Both underwent a modernizing process in the post-war era; there was no turning back for either.

PART II:
THE MODERNIZATION OF COUNTRY MUSIC

CHAPTER 4—ALTERNATIVE STRING BANDS
AND OLD TIME REVIVALISTS:
THE RESURGENCE OF TRADITIONAL COUNTRY MUSIC
IN A MODERNIZED FORM

After World War II, country music underwent a transformation in both musical composition and audience demographics that reflected changes in southern society and fluctuations in performance styles. In distancing themselves from country's rough-hewn roots, the progressives, wartime singers, and western swing acts gave the genre a respectability it did not have before the war. The progressives generally worked within the parameters of southern music, utilizing harmonies, emphasizing vocals, or softening their approach in order to domesticate country music, while continuing to choose lyrical material and instruments that reflected the music's rural, southern upbringing. The wartime performers displayed more of an interest in expanding their audience beyond its Southeast and barn dance radio base. Many dressed in cowboy attire and sang songs about the Old West and American patriotism to attract listeners who previously associated country music with hillbilly imagery. In adopting more popular instrumentation, they distanced themselves even further from derogatory stereotypes. Eclectic western swing performers and early proponents of electric instrumentation offered listeners an urban alternative to the rustic rhythms of pre-war country music, and in doing so completely reconfigured the genre's musical parameters. Together, the progressives, wartime acts, and western swing performers effectively nationalized country music, simultaneously diffusing it across the nation while reconciling it with America's popular music trends. Many country music

performers after the war worked within the nationalization model, fusing country music with other musical genres to promote its commercial viability. Concurrently, two sub-genres developed that reaffirmed country music's southernness in the wake of its wartime dilution. Roughly speaking, one (Honky Tonk) appealed to transplanted rural southerners in rapidly expanding urban areas while the other (Post-War Traditionalism) gained popularity among rural folk hesitant to accept the progressive sounds that accompanied country music's nationalization. The post-war traditionalists survived without the benefit of radio airplay or aggressive record company marketing in rural pockets throughout the Southeast. Their success in light of post-war industry trends demonstrated that the old-time/pre-war sound and lyrical emphasis retained a substantial following long after their descent from commercial dominance.

The post-war traditionalists offered a diversity of sounds and lyrical subject matter for listeners. They can essentially be broken down into three groups: the old-time revivalists, post-war duets, and alternative string bands. Little if anything distinguished the old-time revivalists from their old-time and pre-war progressive counterparts. Grandpa Jones made a career out of playing banjo in an old-time style while some acts, like the Bailes Brothers and Molly O'Day spoke to the post-war apprehensions of thousands of southerners with their religious-orientated lyrics, usually sung in rough singing styles. The post-war duet acts carried on the harmonic traditions of the Blue Sky Boys and other brother acts of the 1930s, some incorporating modern instrumentation. A third group, the alternative string bands, embraced the jazzy improvisational leanings of western swing, sans the electric

instrumentation and hedonistic impulse. They forged a sound that became known as "bluegrass," a term that did not come into widespread usage until well into the 1950s. Before it had a name, however, listeners simply viewed it as old-time music played in a new way.¹

Alternative string band music stemmed from the pre-war sounds of Bill Monroe, the Carlisle Brothers, and other groups of the thirties that emphasized musical showmanship. Groups in this new mold resembled old-time string bands in their utilization of acoustic instruments and rural-derived lyrical repertoire, but differed greatly in their performing style. For one thing, bluegrass bands tended to play their songs at a faster pace; for another their instrumental solos owed more to jazz impulses than they did to melodic constraints. From the pre-war progressives, they borrowed an emphasis on vocal harmonies, but their singing style tended to be high-pitched and blusier, with more emphasis on multiple vocal parts. Instrumentally, the guitar and fiddle played a diminished role, with innovative mandolin and banjo playing taking more lead parts. Finally, their music evinced more seriousness than pre-war country acts, with performers more interested in demonstrating their musical dexterity than in entertaining audiences through humor. Alternative string band music was progressive in its modification of pre-war musical tenets and alternative in its rejection of contemporary country's utilization of electric instrumentation and pop stylings. Bluegrass provided a refuge for musicians and listeners seeking dynamic

¹ Neil V. Rosenberg, "Bluegrass, Rock and Roll, and 'Blue Moon of Kentucky,'" Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 67.

country music with an old-time sound. Described by Alan Lomax as "folk music in overdrive with a silvery, rippling, pinging sound," bluegrass rejuvenated pre-war country music and in the process kept the old-time traditions alive long after they disappeared from country's commercial mainstream. In modernizing the Southeast string band sound, bluegrass groups maintained its impact on contemporary and future musicians and ensured its survival in the winds of change.²

No single performer deserves more credit for the development of the alternative string-band sound than Bill Monroe. Defying contemporary trends within country music, Monroe set out to create a variation of the acoustically based string band sound in the post-war years. The new sound combined the velocity of his early rendition of "Muleskinner Blues" with a syncopated rhythmic background and instrumental embellishments. Additionally, a strong blues element permeated through high-pitched singing and expressive fiddling. Lyrically, the songs presented an idyllic view of the rural past as well as elements of religion, mournfulness, and tragedy. With its strong rural components, Monroe maintains that he intended the music for folks in

² L. Mayne Smith, "An Introduction to Bluegrass," Journal of American Folklore Vol. 78, No. 309 (July-September 1965): 245-250; Robert Cantwell, Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) 68-76; Neil V. Rosenberg, "Bluegrass," Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 993-994; Charles K. Wolfe, Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982) 96-97; Robert Cantwell, "Mimesis in Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Music," All That Glitters: Country Music in America, Ed. George H. Lewis (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1993) 9; Alan Lomax, "Bluegrass Background: Folk Music With Overdrive," Esquire Vol. 52, No. 4 (October 1959): 108.

the hinterland: "I thought bluegrass would never get no further than the farmer; I designed it the way I thought he would like it, because that was where I was raised." Monroe's vision of the alternative string band sound centered around several key components, as he explains: "Bluegrass--it's a high pitched music when you come to singing. And it's got a touch of blues in it. It's got a little touch of jazz in it. And it's got bagpipes in it. And it's got hymn singing in it. And it's got a wonderful drive, a good beat." In his pre-war recordings, Monroe constructed the framework for the music, particularly with his propulsive mandolin playing and wailing vocals. Aside from these important distinctions, however, Monroe's band resembled many other acts of the period. After the war, the alternative string band sound began to coalesce, first with the hiring of vocalist/guitarist Lester Flatt in the spring of 1945 and later with the addition of banjoist Earl Scruggs the following autumn.³

Lester Flatt began playing guitar for tips on the streets of Liberty, Tennessee as a youngster. As a teenager, he worked in the textile mills, first in Tennessee and later in Virginia. He continued to harbor thoughts of becoming a full-time musician, and in 1939 (at the age of 25) joined a group on Roanoke radio. He worked briefly with Clyde Moody in North Carolina before returning to Tennessee in 1942 in search of

³ Bill Monroe quoted in Charles K. Wolfe, "Bluegrass Touches: An Interview with Bill Monroe," Old Time Music No. 16 (September 1975): 7; Bill Monroe quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 140-141; Rosenberg, "Bluegrass, Rock and Roll, and 'Blue Moon of Kentucky,'" 190; Clyde Moody, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 2 April 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Cantwell, Bluegrass Breakdown, 73; Neil V. Rosenberg, Bluegrass: A History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) 68-71.

more stable employment. He drifted in and out of the music business during the war, touring for a time with Charlie Monroe's Kentucky Pardners, before joining Bill Monroe in 1945. An appreciator of old-time music, Flatt played rhythm guitar in a two-pick style, brushing chords by alternating bass notes and downstrokes. He also brought to the Blue Grass Boys a soft, mournful voice perfectly suited for the group's repertoire.⁴⁴

Earl Scruggs' admission to the band in September 1945 marked a turning point in country music history. At the time, as Bill Monroe points out, "(the banjo) was on its way out," largely due to the ascendance of Southwestern and popular music sounds in the war years and the progressives' downplay of the instrument in favor of guitar and mandolin parts. The novel three-finger banjo-playing style that Scruggs introduced to the Grand Ole Opry audience when he began appearing on the show with Monroe captivated listeners and reawakened interest in the instrument. Scruggs grew up in western North Carolina, a region where the distinctive style flourished in the 1930s. Unlike the frailing technique used by most banjoists in the Southeast, the three-finger method of playing placed less emphasis on rhythm than on single-note picking, allowing nimble-fingered musicians to strike a remarkable number of notes when playing at a fast pace. As a youngster, Scruggs tried to play the clawhammer/frailing style but found it too uncomfortable. Upon hearing the regional style popular throughout the area in the mid-thirties, he adopted the three-finger method:

⁴ Neil V. Rosenberg, Flatt and Scruggs (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1982) 4-7; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 69.

There were several people around North Carolina, Smiths Hammet, blind man called--by the name of Mac Woolbright, DeWitt ("Snuffy") Jenkins. Those people inspired me and I wanted to pick like them. Before then, I was picking with just a finger and a thumb.

Before the war, while still a teenager, Scruggs worked with local groups like the Carolina Wildcats and the Morris Brothers. After a stint in a textile mill during the war, Scruggs embarked on a full-time career in music, joining a band led by Lost John Miller. The group's trips to Nashville eventually led to an audition with Bill Monroe, with Scruggs accepting the position in September 1945 after Miller decided to stop touring.⁵

The final crucial piece of the Blue Grass Boys' developing sound fell into place soon thereafter, when fiddler Chubby Wise rejoined the group. Wise initially played in an old-time style, but while working with Monroe he developed a hard-driving, bluesy method of playing in accommodation with the leader's vision: "(When I first joined him) I was a country fiddle player. Bill Monroe taught me the long blue notes. Many a day, in motels and hotels--him with that mandolin and I'd have my fiddle--he taught me to play bluegrass music." With all elements coming together, Monroe began to prepare his group for upcoming appearances on the Grand Ole Opry. Scruggs' breakneck solos elicited an enthusiastic response from Opry management and

⁵ Bill Monroe quoted in "Bluegrass Touches," 11; Earl Scruggs, interview with Douglas B. Green, Madison, 21 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Earl Scruggs quoted in John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music, 693; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 69-71.

the listening audience. Judge Hay began calling him "the boy from North Carolina who makes the banjo talk," and the Opry crowd cheered him on with each solo. The band as a whole rolled along like a perfectly tuned V-8, driven by Monroe's forceful mandolin playing. The stirring effect of their performances mesmerized audiences accustomed to subtler Grand Ole Opry acts.⁶

On record, the band proved no less invigorating. At their first session together in September 1946, they introduced themselves on "Heavy Traffic Ahead," a mid-tempo piece about life on the road. Wise's bluesy fiddle playing shines particularly and Scruggs offers two relatively conservative solos. "Toy Heart," an up-tempo number, gives the young banjoist more of an opportunity to flash his skills as well as showcasing the remarkable vocal interplay between Flatt and Monroe; meanwhile the group's rendition of "Blue Yodel #4" demonstrates Monroe's affinity for both the blues and Jimmie Rodgers songs. The following autumn the group reassembled for two final sessions that interwove ferociously paced numbers like "I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky" and "It's Mighty Dark to Travel" with sentimental and religious tunes. On gospel-tinged songs like "Shine Hallelujah Shine" and "I'm Travelin' On," Monroe uses a close-harmony group singing style (which first appeared on his 1940 rendition of "Cryin' Holy Unto My Lord") that subsequently became standard for bluegrass bands tackling religious material. Rural imagery pervades nearly every song, with

⁶ Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 71-74; Rosenberg, Flatt and Scruggs, 7-10; Charles K. Wolfe, Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977) 84; Chubby Wise quoted in Wayne W. Daniel, "Chubby Wise: Dean of the Bluegrass Fiddlers," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 21, No. 10 (April 1987): 33.

Monroe's penchant for sentimentally depicting southern folklife appearing predominantly on "I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky." "Little Cabin on the Hill" represents another song in this vein, with Lester Flatt's mournful vocal demonstrating why many view him as bluegrass' greatest singer. Complementing Flatt's singing, Monroe's equally impressive mandolin solos reflect his ability to balance soulfulness and skill effortlessly. "Bluegrass Breakdown" marks a musical highpoint for the group. Like most Blue Grass Boys songs, it centers around Monroe's mandolin playing, but it also features outstanding instrumental work from Scruggs and Wise. With its breakneck pace, innovative instrumental solos, and shadowy resemblance to old-time music, it represents the definitive example of the alternative string band sound, as envisioned by Bill Monroe. The departure of Flatt and Scruggs in 1948 presented Monroe with the challenge of whether or not he would be able to duplicate the sound he worked so long and so hard to perfect.⁷

The retention of Chubby Wise offered some continuity to Monroe's immediate post-Flatt and Scruggs recordings, done in October 1949. Noticeably, however, Monroe's music became increasingly less democratic, with less emphasis placed on banjo solos, despite the replacement of Scruggs with the thoroughly capable Rudy Lyle. With bluegrass bands beginning to pop up across the South, Monroe's competitive juices started flowing, going so far as to leave Columbia in 1949 after the label signed the Stanley Brothers. Moving to Decca, Monroe rose to the musical

⁷ Mark Humphrey, The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys: 1945-1949 (New York: Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., 1992) 23.

challenge, recording several fine numbers with Lyle, guitarist/vocalist Jimmy Martin, and fiddler Vassar Clements. Reaffirming his role as progenitor of the alternative string band sound, Monroe began the fifties with "Blue Grass Ramble," an instrumental that exhibited his preference for the mandolin as the centerpiece of bluegrass. Lyrically, Monroe delved even deeper into rural imagery for all types of songs, from celebrations of love ("My Little Georgia Rose") to sentimental recollections of the past ("I'm On My Way to the Old Home"). In "Uncle Pen," Monroe tips his hat to one of his prime musical influences while demonstrating his underrated storytelling abilities. He also recorded several Jimmie Rodgers covers that accent his aforementioned fondness for blues flavored material. Recognizing the need to move forward, Monroe experimented with such novel approaches as three-part singing on secular numbers (used to nice effect on "On and On") and multiple fiddle ensembles (showcased on "White Horses"). Remarkably, Monroe never lost his footing, surviving the country rock and Nashville Sound periods through as much stubbornness as perseverance. Bill Monroe and bluegrass became inextricably associated with one another as time wore on, largely due to Monroe's fortitude in preserving his musical vision. In the realms of country music history, he remains one the genre's most recognized figures.⁸

⁸ Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 46 (12 November 1949): 35; Humphrey, The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 31; Rosenberg, "Bluegrass: 1950-1958" (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1989) 57-62.

When Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs left Bill Monroe in 1948, bluegrass as a musical form began to branch out from the Monroe source in different directions. Flatt and Scruggs possessed their own musical vision of the alternative string band sound, one characterized less by frenetic mandolin solos than by rolling banjo passages. Lyrically, their recording output resembled Monroe's in their nearly identical emphasis on lost love themes and serious subject matter, both contributing to around thirty percent of their pre-1955 selections. Musically, however, they lowered the singing pitch and slowed the tempo somewhat, creating a relaxed atmosphere that belied Flatt's sorrowful lyrics and Scruggs' taut, note-filled solos. Flatt and Scruggs created a bluegrass sound as expressive as it was impressive, drawing listeners into songs instead of distancing them with abstract musicianship. In this, they remained more musically grounded in the pre-war country duets than in the string band or jazz traditions that shaped Monroe's musical approach.

Flatt and Scruggs did not leave Monroe with the intention of forming their own group; inevitably, however, they teamed up and began appearing on Virginia radio in March 1948. From there, they began a tour of stations in the mid-South and the Carolinas. They made their first post-war recordings (accompanied by a second guitar, fiddle, and string bassist) in the autumn of 1948 after signing with Mercury records. During their two-year tenure with the label, they recorded several gospel selections on which Scruggs played guitar, but on secular numbers, Scruggs' banjo playing clearly becomes the group's focal point. Mandolinist Curly Seckler joined the fold in 1949, occasionally playing solos on some of the band's recordings, but both he

and fiddler Benny Sims remained subservient to Scruggs' banjo. In the band's first recorded numbers that featured a banjo ("We'll Meet Again Sweetheart," "My Cabin in Caroline"), the mandolin is noticeably absent, with Scruggs' playing circling around Flatt's vocals instead. The easy-going feel of songs like "Down the Road" portended the direction the group would take in the coming years. "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" (from 1949) symbolized Flatt and Scruggs' musical declaration of independence from Monroe, rolling along with a breeziness and carefree abandon that contrasted with Monroe's high-compressed arrangements. Moving to Columbia in 1950, the band's sound reached maturity, with Flatt coming into his own as a singer-songwriter on selections like "I Waiting to Hear You Call Me Darling" and "The Old Home Town." Flatt uses subtle inflections of his voice to accentuate a song's lyrical imagery, lending a sorrowful feel to slower numbers and a somber tone to religious numbers. Scruggs' playful banjo style on instrumentals like "Dear Old Dixie" and "Flint Hill Special" offsets the group's otherwise somber repertoire. On light-hearted lyrical numbers (e.g. "Don't Get Above Your Raising"), Scruggs swirls around Flatt's vocal and experiments with different banjo sounds. The addition of Benny Martin on fiddle in 1952 furthered this trend. Like Chubby Wise, Martin's playing owed a great deal to the blues but he also accentuated his solos with jazz flourishes that complemented Scruggs' improvisations (i.e. "Flint Hill Special," "Your Love is Like a Flower"). The band supplemented other touches to the sound as well, with Louis Innis' percussive acoustic guitar providing a heavier beat and Burkett H. "Buck" Graves' dobro (after 1955) adding yet another dimension. Experiments with pop-

flavored material (“’Tis Sweet to Be Remembered,” “Till the End of the World Rolls ‘Round”) signaled Flatt and Scruggs’ ability to smoothly bridge the gap between artistry and commercialism. Given the band’s musical accessibility, it is not surprising that they enjoyed considerable commercial success, particularly in the sixties with the folk music revival. A long association with Martha White Flour led to a series of popular radio and television shows featuring the duo. Flatt and Scruggs’ openness to new sounds allowed them to breach the barrier between alternative string band and mainstream country music. Remarkably, they succeeded without ever compromising their musical integrity.⁹

The western North Carolina region that spawned the three-finger banjo picking style that Earl Scruggs popularized also produced Don Reno, early bluegrass’ most accomplished musician. Reno possessed a fine tenor voice as well and when he teamed with Red Smiley in the early 1950s, produced several close-harmony vocal duets reminiscent of the Blue Sky Boys and the Delmore Brothers. In addition to being one of the first groups to mix close harmony with the alternative string band sound, Don Reno, Red Smiley and the Tennessee Cut-Ups recorded some of the most innovative bluegrass of the period, featuring Reno’s arsenal of playing styles as well as electric instrumentation and a rhythmic/harmonic structure borrowed from western swing. Years ahead of their time, Reno and Smiley at once demonstrated an

⁹ Neil V. Rosenberg, liner notes, *Flatt and Scruggs: The Golden Era*, Rounder CD SS 05/SMSP A 22614, 1992; Rosenberg, *Flatt and Scruggs*, 11-12; Neil V. Rosenberg, *Flatt and Scruggs, 1948-1959* (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1991) 1-3.

appreciation for tradition and a musical foresight that suspended them above their contemporaries.

Don Reno grew up in the Carolinas, where he learned to play both guitar and banjo by the time he reached his teens. Like so many other young musicians in the area, the three-finger picking style found its way into his banjo playing, but he also credits the Delmore Brothers as an influence. Reno joined the Morris Brothers in 1940 and eventually formed his own band in 1943. Hearing Reno in Spartanburg, Bill Monroe invited the young musician to join the Blue Grass Boys, but the military draft precluded the arrangement. After the war, he returned to South Carolina, and upon learning of Earl Scruggs' departure, teamed with Monroe briefly before joining a band led by Tommy Magness that included a vocalist named Red Smiley. A native of Asheville, North Carolina, Smiley grew up entrenched in folk music, mainly through his father's association with Bascom Lamar Lunsford, founder of the Asheville Folk Festival. By the late 1930s, he was working on Knoxville radio. After their brief tenure with Magness, Reno and Smiley eventually formed their own band in 1951, signing with King Records the following year.¹⁰

At the behest of King executive Syd Nathan, Reno and Smiley centered their first King session on gospel material. Reno played mandolin on several of these numbers, but "I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap," which featured his double-string

¹⁰ Smith, "An Introduction to Bluegrass," 252-253; Linda Stanley, "Don Reno: A Bluegrass Family Tradition," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 1980): 18-21; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 105; Bob Artis, Bluegrass: From the Lonesome Wail of A Mountain Love Song to the Hammering Drive of the Scruggs-style Banjo, the Story of an American Musical Tradition (New York: Norton Publications, 1975) 61-62.

banjo work, became the session's big seller. Several other selections featured his banjo-playing as well: "Tennessee Cut-Up Breakdown" displayed his high-velocity picking, while "Crazy Finger Blues" and "There's Another Baby Waiting For Me Down the Line" showed him experimenting with different tunings. For the most part, however, the session demonstrated the band's musical roots, with the aforementioned "There's Another Baby Waiting For Me Down the Line" sounding more like a Callahan Brothers' number and "A Pretty Wreath for Mother's Grave" squarely in the Blue Sky Boys' tradition. The tributary feel extended into their second session for King, in early 1953 (e.g. "My Mother's Bible," "I Could Cry"), but in their utilization of electric bass and snare drums they showed their experimental inclinations and, with "Emotions," their willingness to try pop-flavored material. The real standouts of these sessions were the instrumentals, with "Dixie Breakdown" and "Tennessee Breakdown" showcasing Reno's ability to maneuver the banjo neck at a lightning pace. "Limestone Blues" provides a sterling example of Reno's mastery of the instrument, alternating chordal passages with single-note runs. The group's revival of the old popular tune became a bluegrass standard. Reno explains his reasons for incorporating older songs into the group's repertoire:

If it was a hit on Tin Pan Alley, then everybody in the world could hum a few bars. If it had been in the movies, like "Limestone Blues"—the tune always kind of haunted me...People would say you can't play that on the banjo. I'd say if you can play it on one instrument you can play it on another.

On the band's November 1954 session, Reno demonstrated his pyrotechnical skills on "Charlotte Breakdown" while the group adopted a twin fiddle approach on several other numbers. Two slower-paced numbers ("Double Banjo Blues" and "Banjo Riff") illustrate the musical chemistry of Reno and fiddler Mack Magaha, who also provides a third part in Reno and Smiley's mellifluous harmony. "Jesus is Waiting" and "Get Behind Me Satan" illustrate Reno's command of the standard acoustic guitar, with his flat-picking solo on the latter providing one of the many musical highlights of his career. In 1955, after years of being a studio band, Reno and Smiley organized a touring version of the Tennessee Cut-Ups. Moving to Virginia, the band became a staple on the Old Dominion Barn Dance in the 1950s and early 1960s. Several bluegrass groups in the 1960s and beyond adopted many of their innovations, with many young banjoists taking their cue from Reno's instrumental work.¹¹

While producing some outstanding lead vocal and harmony work, groups like Reno and Smiley, Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys, and Flatt and Scruggs more often than not emphasized the instrumental side of the alternative string band sound. For the most part, they derived this style from the musical tradition of the mid-South and western North Carolina regions. The Stanley Brothers, on the other hand, emphasized

¹¹ Artis, Bluegrass, 62-63; Don Reno quoted in Rhonda Strickland, "Don Reno, Reflections," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 19 No. 6 (December 1984): 10; Bill Vernon and Gary B. Reid, Don Reno and Red Smiley and the Tennessee Cut-Ups, 1951-1959 (Dearborn: Highland Music, Inc., 1993) 2-13; Stanley, "Don Reno," 22; Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 336.

their Appalachian roots in both their musical approach and emphasis and in the process produced some of country music's most haunting harmonies and gothic lyrical imagery. Almost twenty-five percent of their recorded output before 1955 centered on death, most often of a violent or tragic nature. They equally excelled at songs that dissected the emotional tribulations of heartache and human suffering. Similar to the Delmore Brothers and Hank Williams, they used the southern rural landscape to great effect in producing lyrical imagery that portrayed afflictions of the spirit. As time wore on, they tempered their lyrical approach with increased emphasis on their considerable musical talents, but in the late forties and early fifties few acts could match their ability to produce atmospheric country music with a decidedly melancholy slant.

As a product of deep Appalachia, the Stanley Brothers owed much of their lyrical worldview to the mindset of the mountain folk. Historian Jack Kirby describes the sub-region as "a different South...hidden behind a mountain fastness, serenely beyond the modern world, primitive, clannish, violent, and beautiful." A 1942 sociological study of an area near the Stanley's birthplace described a culturally isolated community with no cars, electricity, or telephones and a value system (termed "Traditionalism") designed to protect the social structure from modernizing influences. Strong family ties, a Puritan worldview of absolute rights and wrongs, and a religious vision of an omnipotent, austere God shaped the values of its inhabitants.

Aesthetically pleasing with lush, rolling hills, the southern Appalachians were also rugged and forbidding.¹²

The Stanleys grew up in Dickenson County, in southwest Virginia, an area steeped in mountain folkways and reeling in the effects of the Depression.

Romanticized in the nineteenth century as one of the last bastions of pre-industrial society, southern Appalachia in the 1930s found itself wrapped up in the economic downturn of a coal mining industry that came to the region in the early 1900s.

Wracked by labor strife and mining disasters, Ralph Stanley recalls the pernicious nature of mountain life:

There's always been a lot of murder, a lot of death and heartache in these mountains. Life was very, very hard here. It was all you could do to get through it. The old songs I do are all about that, about the hardness of life and the hope for something better beyond.

Like many other mountain families, the Stanleys turned to music for recreational escape and to the church for fortitude. In the local church, the Stanley Brothers learned the basics of acapella singing as well as the tenets of their religion. At home, their father sang old-time ballads and their mother picked the five-string banjo, eventually teaching both her sons how to play the instrument. In 1936, their musical education continued when their family purchased a battery-powered radio that brought

¹² Jack Temple Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 80; Harry K. Schwarzweller, Mountain Families in Transition: A Case Study of Appalachian Migration (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971) 6-9, 58-75.

the sounds of the Carter Family, Mainer's Mountaineers and the Grand Ole Opry into their home. As time wore on, the brothers began playing at school events and pie suppers, eventually making their debut on radio in the early 1940s in Bristol. After serving in World War II, the brothers came home to face the choice of whether or not to attempt careers as professional musicians. Ralph Stanley explains the rationale behind their eventual decision: "We come to think we could make a career out of playing. We knew we didn't want farm work and we darn sure didn't want the mines." After appearing briefly in late 1946 on radio in Norton, Virginia, the brothers (along with mandolinist-singer Darrell "Pee Wee" Lambert) moved to Bristol, Tennessee's WCYB.¹³

While in Bristol, the Stanley Brothers recorded several sides for the Johnson City-based Rich-R-Tone label in 1947. Less responsive to contemporary country trends than local styles, these early recordings reflect the traditional sounds of the mountains. As Ralph Stanley recalls, "We were interested in the old-time sound

¹³ Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, 85-93; Ralph Stanley quoted in Ken Ringle, "The Natural King of Bluegrass: Virginia's Ralph Stanley, the Old-Timey Singer Whose Time Has Come," Washington Post 20 March 1993; Anthony Dellaflora, "True Colors: Bluegrass Legend Ralph Stanley Holds Onto Musical Roots," Rio-Albuquerque Journal 14 April 1994; Charles K. Wolfe, liner notes, The Complete Columbia Stanley Brothers, Columbia CD CK 53798, 1996; Ralph Stanley, interview with Thomas D. Warren, Nashville, 19 October 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Jack Tottle, "The Stanley Brothers: For Most of Their Brilliant First Decade, Bristol Was Home," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 22, No. 4 (October 1987): 27; Rich Kienzle, "The Stanley Brothers," CMSA Newsletter (July-August 1989): 36D-36E; Ralph Stanley quoted in Ringle, "The Natural King of Bluegrass"; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 341.

right from the start." Accordingly, songs like "Little Maggie" and "Mother No Longer Awaits Me At Home" hearken back to older styles. Pee Wee Lambert's tenor vocals and mandolin playing reflect the influence of Bill Monroe (e.g. "Rambler's Blues"), but the group's choice of darker lyrical material and mountain harmonies set them apart from contemporary bluegrass groups. In particular, "Death is Only a Dream" and "Jealous Love" distinguishes the band and portends its future.¹⁴

The group amassed a loyal following at Bristol, but eventually moved to Raleigh's WPTF, where they drew the attention of Columbia Records' Art Satherley. Signing with Columbia in 1949, the band recorded several breathtaking numbers during their two-year tenure with the label. While the Monroe influence reemerged on a couple of selections, the band clearly was developing its own unique sound, one characterized by haunting three-part harmonies and bluesy fiddle work. Working with Flatt and Scruggs on WCYB's Farm and Fun Time, Ralph Stanley's banjo playing began to resemble more contemporary styles, but, as he explains, the group's musical approach remained rooted in Appalachian tradition: "It's got a different sound than any other bluegrass, it's more of a down-to-earth, more of a mountain sound." Lambert's mandolin work and Ralph Stanley's three-finger banjo playing add great effect to the recordings, but the vocals and lyrical material distinguish them more than anything else. Sorrow and death pervade nearly every number, with pastoral imagery often employed to transcend simple tales of destitution into poetic reflections on the anguish of unrequited love and the grievous loss of loved ones. In "White Dove" and

¹⁴ Ralph Stanley quoted in Ringle, "The Natural King of Bluegrass."

"Angels Are Singing In Heaven Tonight," the singer somberly recounts the death of family members and envisions their passage into a brighter hereafter. In "The Fields Have Turned Brown," a young man leaves his birthplace and parents behind to ramble, only to return after their death to find the home desolate and the land barren. In "Little Glass of Wine," a variation of an old mountain tune, a jealous lover poisons a woman after suspecting her of an impropriety, then reveals to her at the end that he has taken the poison as well. In their tales of lost love, the Stanleys utilize the mountain landscape to capture the breadth of the languishment (i.e. "The Lonesome River," "We'll Be Sweethearts in Heaven"). In "Life of Sorrow," the group's effective use of three-part harmony does as much to convey the sorrow of the lyric as the words themselves. Throughout most of these tunes, the Stanleys downplay musicianship in favor of vocal effect and lyrical imagery. In this, they distanced themselves from Monroe's looming shadow. The Columbia releases of the Stanley Brothers mark a high point in post-war traditional lyricism, more poignantly capturing the trials and tribulations of the southern rural folk than any other contemporary recordings.¹⁵

Surprisingly, the Stanley Brothers disbanded in 1950, with Ralph leaving the music business and Carter teaming with Bill Monroe's outfit. Near the end of 1951, they regrouped, eventually signing with Mercury Records in 1953. In the interim, the band embraced many aspects of the alternative string band sound, integrating Monroe's energy with Flatt and Scruggs' focus on the banjo. On their Mercury

¹⁵ Artis, *Bluegrass*, 31-33; Rosenberg, "Bluegrass, Rock and Roll, and 'Blue Moon of Kentucky,'" 196; Tottle, "The Stanley Brothers," 27-29; Ralph Stanley quoted in Dellaflora, "True Colors."

records, the group plays and sings with more assuredness, and, after adding George Shuffler on string bass, with considerable more drive. Lyrically, they produced several memorable numbers. "I'm Longing to See the Old Folks," replete with rural images, tells of a rambler returning to the refuge of his childhood home; "The Weary Heart You Stole Away" offers a mature glimpse of marriage strained by love in doubt; and "Memories of Mother" recounts a young mother's death and the void it leaves in her children's lives. Musically, the group plays more aggressively, with Shuffler's thumbing bass pushing the group to new musical heights and Ralph Stanley coming into his own as a top-notch banjoist in the three-finger picking style. The group also moves more towards musical experimentation, evidenced particularly on "Blue Moon of Kentucky," which bears more than a passing resemblance to Elvis Presley's version. As time wore on, the Stanleys aligned themselves more with the bluegrass sound, moving ever so slowly away from their base in old-time music. Today, many view them as bluegrass icons.¹⁶

Several other groups began to emulate and expand on the "bluegrass" sound in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Many old-time sounding bands became "bluegrass" groups. Mac Wiseman, who worked briefly with Flatt and Scruggs and Bill Monroe in the late forties, became one of the most successful bluegrass acts of the 1950s on the strength of his impressive guitar playing, unique voice, and distinct twin-fiddle sound. Jimmy Martin (who worked with Bill Monroe in the early fifties) carried on

¹⁶ Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 100; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 343-344; Artis, Bluegrass, 34.

the hard-driving tradition established by Monroe, augmenting it with more humorous subject matter. A third major bluegrass act that emerged in the 1950s, the Osborne Brothers, added drums and later electric guitar to the alternative string band sound while reversing the established pattern of the high vocal part singing harmony, with Bobby Osborne's tenor providing the melody. These and other groups expanded on Bill Monroe's musical vision of the post-war period and worked to ensure its survival in the rock era. With the folk music revival of the 1960s, they re-established the bluegrass sound and introduced it to a more sophisticated, middle class audience. Ironically, a substantial portion of bluegrass listeners today reside in urban areas.¹⁷

As a branch of the post-war traditional movement, the alternative string bands found an audience among listeners seeking old-time music played in a novel way. For the most part, this audience remained isolated in the Appalachia mountain and rural areas of the mid-South. Record companies were slow to respond to the musical preferences of this demographic group, realizing the profitability of gearing their product for more urban listeners. Consequently, several independent labels appeared that took advantage of this oversight. Among them, Jim Stanton's Rich-R-Tone label (operating out of Johnson City, Tennessee) emerged as the principal beneficiary in the Appalachian region. Stanton established the label in the fall of 1946, using the studios of a radio station in nearby Bristol to record the artists he signed. He recognized the trend in the country music industry towards smoother sounds and sensed the

¹⁷ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 337-338; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 117; Artis, Bluegrass, 71.

Appalachian region's preference for older styles. He began by selling records out of the trunk of his car, eventually expanding by hiring distributors and posting mail-order ads. As the only independent label in southern Appalachia during the first few years of his operation, he tapped into the region's vast reservoir of local talent. Most notably, he signed the Stanley Brothers, Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper, and the Bailey Brothers. Stanton had no problem peddling the releases of the Stanley Brothers and other artists in surrounding communities, but sold few outside the area. Nevertheless, by filling the void created by the majors' neglect of local preferences, Stanton netted a profit. Other Appalachian-based labels emerged in the late forties and early fifties, but few reached the degree of success enjoyed by Stanton.¹⁸

Rich-R-Tone and other independent labels offered post-war traditional performers a commercial outlet for their music. They took chances on acts deemed old-fashioned by late forties country music standards. Many of these seemingly obsolete groups included banjo pickers, others featured female vocalists. In general, the immediate post-war period represented a time when women struggled to re-establish their place in country music. In the 1930s, radio and the domestication of country music helped their cause considerably, but after the war the male-dominated recording industry and traditional southern mores concerning female performers hindered their progress and negated many of their achievements. This trend relegated

¹⁸ Tottle, "The Stanley Brothers," 29; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 81-82; Richard Spottswood, "Country Music and the Phonograph," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 21, No. 8 (February 1987): 22; Kip Lornell, liner notes, Virginia Traditions: Early Roanoke Country Radio, Blue Ridge Institute LP 010, 1988.

women to independent labels and effectively blocked their advancement. The post-war traditional field, with its radio and rural folk base, initially offered women the best opportunity for a career in country music. As an outgrowth of the string band tradition, bluegrass remained a man's domain, but female performers in the Southeast could still find work on radio, playing old-time ballads and other song-types in the Carter Family tradition. Many sang with their husbands as male-female radio duets continued to flourish in the late forties. In the post-war traditional field, Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper emerged as one of the most successful acts in this vein.

The two met in the early 1940s when Stoney Cooper joined the touring Leary Family Singers, an act comprised of Wilma Lee, her mother, father, and three sisters. After the war, the two (by then married) embarked on their own, eventually landing on Wheeling radio in 1947. That same year they secured a recording contract with Rich-R-Tone before obtaining a major label contract with Columbia in 1948. Together with their group (The Clinch Mountain Clan), Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper remained a popular fixture on Wheeling radio for a decade, entertaining their audience with their old-time style and repertoire. Undoubtedly influenced by Roy Acuff, Wilma Lee describes herself as a product of Appalachian tradition: "I'm a country singer with (a) mountain twang." In her duets with Stoney and her solo singing, Wilma Lee Cooper became one of the most respected female singers of the post-war era.¹⁹

¹⁹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 223; Robert Cogswell, "'We Made Our Name in the Days of Radio': A Look at the Career of Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper," *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly* Vol. 11, No. 38 (Summer 1975): 67-73; Wayne W. Daniel, "Wilma Lee Cooper: America's Most Authentic Mountain Singer,"

The most towering female figure in the post-war traditional field remains Molly O'Day. While Bill Monroe and other bluegrass musicians redefined the string band sound, O'Day reawakened interest in the emotional, heartfelt singing style made famous by Roy Acuff. Few country singers of her time could match the fervor she put into her vocal performances. Specializing in gospel songs and numbers laced with tragedy, O'Day appealed to thousands of rural southerners in the Appalachian region attracted to the sincerity and warmth of her voice. Working with her husband, Lynn Davis and a band of traditionally minded musicians (the Cumberland Mountain Folks), O'Day reproduced the Acuff sound and applied it to the post-war setting. With heartfelt determination to retain country music's moral purpose, O'Day also worked to keep alive the gospel tradition. Both her singing style and fortitude served as a model for dozens of major female performers of the 1950s and beyond.

Born LaVerne Williamson in Pike County, Kentucky, the future Molly O'Day grew up listening to female performers on the National Barn Dance and the Grand Ole Opry (of whom Lula Belle Wiseman remained her favorite). With her brothers, she began performing locally as a youngster and eventually embarked on a radio career in West Virginia in 1939, predominantly singing comic and cowboy numbers. After the band dissolved in 1940, she contacted a performer named Lynn Davis about a position with a band based out of Kentucky. In the spring of 1941, she and Davis married and subsequently embarked on a tour of stations, including one in Montgomery where they

met a young musician named Hank Williams who introduced them to a song called "Tramp on the Street," which they soon incorporated into their repertoire. Over the course of the war, Williamson changed her name to Molly O'Day and the group began focusing on more gospel-tinged material. After World War II, they settled in East Tennessee, where publisher Fred Rose heard them sing "Tramp on the Street" over WNOX and arranged a meeting with Columbia's Art Satherley about the possibility of recording the group. Released in the summer of 1947, "Tramp on the Street" brought O'Day and Davis increased popularity, particularly in the Appalachian region. Over the next few years, they drifted in and out of the music business, eventually leaving it entirely in the early 1950s for more religious pursuits. The records they made for Columbia in the late 1940s with the Cumberland Mountain Folks remain some of the emotionally expressive of the post-war period.²⁰

The group's first sessions (in December 1946 and December 1947) musically revolve around George "Speedy" Krise's dobro playing and old-time fiddling. Davis provides a duet vocal on several numbers (most effectively on "Why Do You Weep Dear Willow?" and "Too Late Too Late"), but O'Day is clearly the centerpiece of the proceedings. She delivers three emotionally filled interpretations of Hank Williams' compositions that show her debt to Roy Acuff's singing style. She excels at mournful and tragic songs like "Tramp on the Street" and "I Heard My Mother Weeping," and

²⁰ Ivan M. Tribe and John W. Morris, "Molly O'Day and Lynn Davis," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 9, No. 3 (September 1974): 10-14; Ivan M. Tribe, liner notes, Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks, Bear Family CD BCD 15565, 1992; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 219.

shows her prowess with gospel material on "Matthew Twenty-Four" as well. Collectively, it is a stunning series of vocal performances. Returning to the studio in 1948 with even more determination and assuredness in her voice, she produced one of country music's finest gospel vocal performances of "Coming Down From God" (accented by her own clawhammer banjo picking) and continued her mastery of songs filled with tragedy on "Teardrops Falling on the Snow," an emotion-packed number about a mother's loss of her soldier-son. Jimmie Selph's dobro-modeled electric steel guitar playing updates the sound somewhat, but the music is clearly roots-orientated. At their first session in 1950 and 1951, O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks focus even more on gospel material, with "When My Time Comes to Go" and "When We See Our Redeemer's Face" providing chilling high points. No female country singer ever sang religious material with more conviction, and few could match her vocal sincerity on somber numbers. Together with Hank Williams, Molly O'Day kept alive a singing style that would otherwise have withered in the post-war zeal to expand country music's markets with smoother approaches. She provides proof of country music's emotive capabilities and domestic heritage.²¹

Not all country music produced by the post-war traditionalists was as somber in lyrical tone as that produced by Molly O'Day and the Stanley Brothers or as complex in musical arrangement as the alternative string band sound. Country music has deep comedic roots as well, dating back to the traveling minstrel show and carried

²¹ Ivan Tribe and Richard Weize, "Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks," in Tribe, Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks,

on in the genre's early period by performers like Uncle Dave Macon. In the late 1940s, Grandpa Jones emerged as the torchbearer of country comedy in the post-war traditional field. With an engaging personality and keen wit, Jones combined a mastery of old-time banjo with a self-deprecating humor to create a style that jokingly commented on the South's folk roots and the region's stumble into the modern period. In the process, he demonstrated the appeal of humorous lyrics and older banjo-playing techniques in the post-war period.

The son of a Kentucky sharecropper, Louis Marshall ("Grandpa") Jones (1913-1998) grew up listening to the WLS Barn Dance and the Jimmie Rodgers recordings his brothers collected. He began playing at local dances at age eleven, and in his later teens commenced a radio career that eventually teamed him with Bradley Kincaid in the mid-thirties. From his association with Kincaid, Jones learned a great deal of traditional material and gained professional experience in touring. The veteran folk singer also gave Jones the idea for the "Grandpa" persona he later adopted, a moniker indicative of both his preference for older song material and raspy (yet resonating) voice. Parting ways with Kincaid in 1937, Jones embarked on a solo career that took him to several West Virginia Radio stations, playing predominantly Jimmie Rodgers and Bradley Kincaid-type songs to the accompaniment of his own acoustic guitar playing. In Wheeling, he took the opportunity to learn to play banjo (in the old frailing style) as a means of customizing his instrumentation to mountain-audience preferences. During the war years, he moved to Cincinnati, appearing on the Boone County Jamboree and recording his first sides with Merle Travis for record shop

owner Syd Nathan's new King label before enlisting in the army. Stationed in Europe, Jones continued to play music over the Armed Forces Network as part of the Munich Mountaineers. The show drew a great deal of fan mail from soldiers wanting to hear country material, and Jones took note of the appeal of his old-time banjo playing. After the war, he returned to Cincinnati and made his debut on the Grand Ole Opry in March of 1946. In the late 1940s, he appeared on both the Opry and on Richmond's Old Dominion Barn Dance, eventually becoming a permanent fixture on the WSM program in the late 1950s.²²

Grandpa Jones deserves a great deal of credit for sustaining interest in old-time banjo playing at a time when the three-finger style was ascending in popularity. Interest in the banjo plummeted in the late 1930s with the proliferation of progressive duets that emphasized mandolin playing. Uncle Dave Macon and Carolina banjo pickers like Wade Mainer and Snuffy Jenkins maintained the instrument's presence on the country music scene, but its future remained uncertain. After the war, the alternative string bands rescued the instrument from obscurity with their novel playing technique but in the process rendered the frailing method of playing anachronistic. Merging his natural comedic abilities with his "Grandpa" persona and enthusiastic performing style, Jones demonstrated the appeal of the older style of playing when applied to up-tempo humorous numbers, including re-interpretations of traditional

²² Grandpa Jones, Everybody's Grandpa: Fifty Years Behind the Mike (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 44-101; Charles K. Wolfe, "The Music of Grandpa Jones," Journal of Country Music Vol. 8, No. 3 (1981): 47-48, 65-66, 70-72; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 217.

material. In the process, he made a career for himself as a reversional act appealing to rural southerners attracted to his old-time sounds and folkish humor as well as neo-urbanites seeking an alternative to contemporary country sounds.²³

Jones began his recording career in 1943, performing with Merle Travis as the Sheppard Brothers for King's inaugural pressings. The first releases under his own name also featured Travis on guitar, who added a bluesy flavor to a number of songs about failed relationships. From the start, however, Jones seems much more at ease with different subject matter, turning in two fine vocal performances on a prison lament ("It's Raining Here This Morning") and a rounder tune ("I've Been All Around this World"). The two returned to the studio after the war for another session (in March 1946), replicating the rhythm acoustic/lead electric guitar sound, with "Eight More Miles to Louisville" marking a high point of their collaborative efforts. Travis and Jones recorded two religious sides with the Delmore Brothers at that same session as the Brown's Ferry Four, what would become one of country music's most popular gospel groups (with Travis and Red Foley alternating as the fourth member). While Jones' solo sides sold respectably, he did not have a big seller until he recorded "Mountain Dew" in March of 1947 with a group that included the multi-talented team of Henry "Homer" Haynes on guitar and Kenneth "Jethro" Burns on mandolin. Both "Mountain Dew" and another song from the session ("Going Down the Country")

²³ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 126; Rich Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," The Country Music Book, ed. Michael Mason (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1985) 144-148.

prominently featured Jones on banjo, the first time he recorded with the instrument.

Jones explains his reasons for experimenting with this new approach:

The greats who played old-time banjo, like Uncle Dave Macon, couldn't get recorded during those years--the sound wasn't 'modern' enough. But I knew from my mail and from my fans at shows that they did like my old-time frailing banjo style, especially on fast numbers...About that same time Earl Scruggs had been playing his new bluegrass banjo with Bill Monroe, and they were going over well on the Opry and on records, so I thought that I might try recording a little old-time banjo playing.

"Mountain Dew" became his biggest seller to date and convinced him and Nathan that a market existed for this type of sound. As Jones explains: "After that, I started using my banjo more and more, and doing more up-tempo songs with an old-time flavor."

A follow-up single in the same up-tempo, humorous vein ("Old Rattler") sold even better, cementing Jones' association with the banjo as well as the "Grandpa" persona.²⁴

For the remainder of his time with King Records (until late 1951), Jones produced several up-tempo, banjo-centered numbers, including "I'm My Own Grandpa," "Uncle Eph's Got the Coon," and "My Little Nagging Wife," with the last number noticeably demonstrating the Uncle Dave Macon influence. Jones obviously excelled at humorous/novelty pieces, but he also possessed an ability to carry religious

²⁴ Charles K. Wolfe, "Grandpa Jones Discography," 237-245; Jones, Everybody's Grandpa, 110-112.

numbers like "Jonah and the Whale," as well as traditional tunes like "Jesse James" in a thoroughly convincing fashion.

Switching to RCA-Victor in 1952, Jones recorded a series of topical and novelty numbers with Chet Atkins and several other notable Nashville musicians, including fiddler Tommy Jackson and steel guitarist Jerry Byrd. According to Jones, RCA producer Steve Sholes encouraged the movement towards topical material, with mixed results. "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet," which offers a humorous glimpse into the future, and "TV Blues," commenting on the impact of television, stand out as effective satirical pieces. Jones is clearly more comfortable, however, with older sounding tunes such as the self-penned "The Closer to the Bone (The Sweeter is the Meat)" and traditional numbers like "Old Dan Tucker." Several selections from the RCA years feature the musical interplay between Jones and Atkins (most notably on "Sass-a-Frass") as well as the continued integration of old-time sounds with newer electric ones. Regardless of the musical setting, Jones emerges as the focal point of the proceedings, drawing listeners in with his magnetic personality and high-spirited playing. A stalwart of the old-time sound, Grandpa Jones refuted the contemporary belief that music needed to evolve in order to remain vibrant. Jones' sense of humor and infectious banjo-playing remain timeless in their appeal to country music listeners.²⁵

²⁵ Wolfe, "Grandpa Jones Discography," 245-248; Jones, Everybody's Grandpa, 127-128.

While Jones kept alive elements of the musical spirit of country music's pioneers, several duet harmony groups in the late 1940s and early 1950s built upon the vocal and instrumental innovations of the progressives. Musically, they retained the mandolin and dobro but also displayed a willingness to incorporate the bluegrass banjo style and other popular post-war sounds into their repertoire. As time wore on, this new generation of duets drifted either closer to mainstream country or to the alternative string band sound as their pre-war musical influences became viewed as passé. In their modernization of pre-war vocal and musical styles, they endeavored to secure a foothold in the country music industry without having to abandon the old-time sounds and lyrical themes they heard as youths. Their success demonstrated that wartime nationalization and the ascension of western swing instrumentation did not obliterate the rural tradition in country music, but rather placed it in a state of occultation. Disguising their rural roots in modern arrangements, three harmony-based acts of the post-war period (Johnnie and Jack, Jim and Jesse, and the Louvin Brothers) reconciled the folk tradition with contemporary trends.

Of the three aforementioned duet-based groups, Johnnie (Wright) and Jack (Anglin) enjoyed the greatest degree of commercial success in the decade after World War II, scoring five top ten singles between in the period. Instrumentally backed by the Dobro work of Harold B. "Shot" Jackson and the fiddling of Paul Warren or Benny Martin, the Johnnie and Jack sound clearly owes more to pre-war than post-war musical trends. Their clever application of gospel-based harmony to secular lyrical material and employment of Latin American percussive effects gave their music a

modern feel, both unique and appealing. Johnnie and Jack were also among the first country music acts to cover rhythm and blues material. Although other tunesmiths furnished them with the song material that became their biggest hits, Wright and Anglin were gifted songwriters, particularly adroit at composing songs that combined clever wordplay with infectious melodies. Their unique vocal style allowed them to shift from religious to secular material with relative ease and equal effectiveness. The consolidation of these attributes enhanced their popularity among a cross-section of listeners, with rural folk attracted to their acoustic sound and old-time harmonies and urbanites drawn in by their novel musical arrangements.

Although Johnnie Wright and Jack Anglin met and worked with one another in the late 1930s, they did not begin their long-term collaboration until after World War II. Jack Anglin grew up in Athens, Alabama, in the same area where the Delmore Brothers lived for a time. Working with his two brothers, Anglin began his radio career in 1935, in Nashville. The Anglin brothers produced several notable records before separating in 1940, but never achieved the commercial success of many other harmony-based groups of the time. After he and his brothers went their separate ways, Jack Anglin moved to Nashville with his wife, where they teamed up with his brother-in-law, Johnnie Wright, and a group of musicians soon to be named the Tennessee Hillbillies. Born in Wilson County, Tennessee, just east of Nashville, Wright grew up listening to the old-time music played by his relatives and the musicians on the Grand Ole Opry. Wright also began his radio career in the mid-thirties in Nashville, working with Murial Deason (a.k.a. Kitty Wells) and her cousin as Johnny Wright and the

Harmony Girls. Both Wright and Deason (who married in 1937) held other jobs in addition to their part time radio work. After the breakup of the Anglin Brothers, Wright and Anglin began flirting with the idea of teaming up professionally, initially making several unsuccessful attempts to get on WSM. In late 1940, the Wrights, Anglins, and the Tennessee Hillbillies relocated to Greensboro, North Carolina, and later to West Virginia in search of a sustaining program on a large station. Wartime gas rationing halted their progress, however, and they returned to Nashville, where Wright obtained a job at a defense plant and Anglin joined Roy Acuff's band before entering the army in mid-1943. Late in the war, the Wrights moved to Knoxville and later Raleigh trying to energize their musical career. After the war, Wright and Anglin reunited in Raleigh before returning to Nashville, where they formed a new group (the Tennessee Mountain Boys) and began appearing daily on WSM, eventually procuring a spot on the Grand Ole Opry. Around this time (1947) they signed with Apollo Records and began their recording career.²⁶

Johnnie and Jack's first recordings with the Tennessee Mountain Boys place them squarely in the pre-war duet tradition in vocal style, musical approach and lyrical repertoire. Mandolinist Paul Buskirk and fiddler Paul Warren both lend an old-time feel to such sentimental numbers as "Lord, Watch Over My Daddy" and "Paper Boy."

²⁶ Ivan M. Tribe and John W. Morris, "The South's Favorite Trio: The Story of the Anglin Brothers," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 13, No. 5 (November 1978): 30-32; Walt Trott, "The Johnny and Jack Story," Johnnie and Jack and the Tennessee Mountain Boys, by Eddie Stubbs and Walt Trott (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 2-9; Eddie Stubbs, "Johnnie and Jack: The Recordings," Johnnie and Jack and the Tennessee Mountain Boys, 10; Douglas B. Green, "Kitty Wells: The Queen Still Reigns," Country Music Vol. 8, No. 9 (June 1980): 41-42.

After recording several gospel numbers as the King Sacred Quartet for King Records in 1947, the band signed with RCA-Victor, making their first recordings for the label in early 1949. Aside from the electric steel guitar work of Shot Jackson (whom they picked up while working on the Louisiana Hayride), they continued in the old-time vein at their first RCA session. Around this time, however, the group began experimenting with novel techniques in search of a sound, as Johnny Wright explains: "We hadn't created for ourselves our own style...we weren't plowing new ground. We were in truth singing like a lot of other people. It takes something different." The three-part vocal chorus on "For Old Times Sake" signaled the group's increasing willingness to blend gospel harmonies with secular lyrical material. In March 1950, they recorded several interesting contemporary religious numbers (including "Too Much Sinning" and "Jesus Hits Like an Atom Bomb") as well as their first sizable hit, "Poison Love." At the suggestion of bass player Ernie Newton, the group added maracas (strapped to Newton's hand) in an effort to create a unique and marketable sound. The maracas gave their songs a Latin American feel, soon to become a trademark of the Tennessee Mountain Boys.²⁷

In the early 1950s, Johnnie and Jack recorded several numbers that featured the group's gospel-like harmony and Latin American percussion, as well as some outstanding instrumental work from Paul Warren and Shot Jackson (who switched from electric steel to dobro). Selections like "Ashes of Love" and "Slow Poison"

²⁷ Johnnie Wright quoted in A. C. Dunkleberger, Queen of Country Music: The Life Story of Kitty Wells (Nashville: Ambrose Publishing Inc., 1977) 42; Stubbs, "Johnnie and Jack: The Recordings," 10-18.

demonstrate the group's new-found approach, in which old-time sounds converge with novel vocal and musical arrangements. Lyrically, Jim Anglin (of the Anglin Brothers) penned some of the most cunning country music songs of the period for the group. In "Heart Trouble," "Love Trap" and several others, Anglin demonstrates his keen (and largely unrecognized) ability to blend clever word play with country themes, a lyrical device that became a fixture in modern country music. The group continued its music expansion in 1954, adding Buddy Harmon on drums and bass singer Culley Holt (then working with the famed Jordanaires vocal group). Holt lent a decidedly pop sound to Johnnie and Jack's country harmonies, undoubtedly contributing to the chart success of "Kiss Crazy Baby," "(Oh Baby Mine) I Get So Lonely," and "Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight." These last two numbers were actually rhythm and blues hits that Johnnie and Jack covered as country songs, with Shot Jackson's Dobro work and Paul Warren fiddling representing the group's continued adherence to traditional sounds. Working with Holt and various incarnations of the Tennessee Mountain Boys, Johnnie and Jack resuscitated the duet tradition through their liberal vocal and music approach, innovative yet never compromising.²⁸

While Johnnie and Jack incorporated elements of pop, ethnic, mainstream country, and gospel music into their sound, other duets like Jim and Jesse explored the possibilities of merging the progressive vocal approach of the Blue Sky Boys and the Delmore Brothers with the alternative string band sound. Jim and Jesse McReynolds succeeded as a country music act through arduous practice and sheer persistence in the

²⁸ Stubbs, "Johnnie and Jack: The Recordings," 19-29.

face of overwhelming obstacles. They grew up in southwestern Virginia, where their father worked in the coal mines in addition to tending to the family's sixty-acre farm. Jim McReynolds entered the mines as a young teenager but quit after a mining accident nearly took the life of his father. The brothers grew up surrounded by music, with several members of their family playing instruments. As Jim McReynolds recalls, the relatives gathered frequently, with music usually being a mainstay at the get-togethers: "(Our father) played banjo and fiddle and all of our uncles played too. Whenever they would come to visit, instead of just talking, they would take out the instruments and pick away." The brothers also grew up listening to the Grand Ole Opry, WNOX, and the records of the Monroe Brothers, the Carter Family, and the Delmore Brothers. Although they began playing together locally, they did not give much thought to pursuing a professional career until Jim returned from army service in 1947. Over the next two years, they made several unsuccessful attempts at establishing themselves on the personal appearance circuit. As Jim McReynolds explains, an unstable Appalachian economy rendered the odds of their success tenuous:

We were working in coal-mining country in the early days. If the miners were working, it was great. But if they got into a labor dispute with the owners and went on strike, it could be pretty difficult. Entertainment was the first thing to go. They had no money to spare.

In 1949, they joined WGAC in Augusta, Georgia, where they began working with Hoke Jenkins, nephew of Snuffy Jenkins, the influential three-finger banjo picker.

Jesse began developing a method of playing called "cross-picking," in which he single-picked at a rapid speed to simulate the western North Carolina banjo style. Jim McReynolds explains the impetus behind his brother's diligence in mastering the difficult method of playing:

In the early days, so many of the groups would try to copy Monroe or do the same thing. But to me, you'd always be putting yourself in second place.

What's sacred to being successful in the music business is you've got to create a sound that your fans will identify you with.

Following their stint in Georgia, the duo embarked on another tour of stations, starting out in Kentucky and then moving on to the Plains states (playing western-flavored music) before returning to Kentucky in 1950. In 1951, they recorded several gospel numbers with Larry Roll as the Virginia Trio for an independent label, many of which showcased Jesse's unique mandolin playing style. The following year they signed a major label contract with Capitol Records, augmenting their acoustic/mandolin/string bass instrumental background with banjo and fiddle that introduced them as a product of both the alternative string band and progressive duet traditions.²⁹

²⁹ Nelson Sears, Jim and Jesse: Appalachia to the Grand Ole Opry (Lancaster: Nelson Sears, 1976) 13-66; Joy McReynolds, letter to Bill Ivey, 27 January 1997, Jim and Jesse Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Jim McReynolds quoted in Dixie Deen, "'Diesel on My Tail': Jim and Jesse," Music City News Vol. 4, No. 11 (May 1967): 6; Jim McReynolds quoted in Robert K. Oermann, "Music is Our Life: Bluegrass Brothers Jim and Jesse Celebrate Fifty Years of Making Music," The Tennessean 29 March 1997; Jim McReynolds quoted in Linda Jean Morris, "Bluegrass Music and Good Times," Yorika Record 27 October 1989; Artis, Bluegrass, 77-78; Dale Vinicur, liner notes, Jim and Jesse, 1952-1955, Bear Family CD BCD 15635, 1992; Dale Vinicur, Jim and Jesse: Bluegrass and More (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1993) 2-8.

Jim and Jesse recorded two sessions with Capitol Records before 1955, producing five singles. With the exception of the instrumentally dominated "Air Mail Special," these records focus predominantly on the close harmony of the brothers. At this stage in their career, the group resembled less a bluegrass entourage than a brother-duet team of the late 1930s. Jesse McReynolds' impressive and innovative mandolin playing (featured predominantly on "I'll Wash Your Love From My Heart," "Are You Missing Me," and "Waiting for a Message") and the three-finger banjo picking of either Hoke or Owen Jenkins distinguished the band from its pre-war counterparts, but the emphasis on the complicated vocal interplay between the McReynolds brothers harkens back to the innovations of the Blue Sky Boys. The act builds on the harmony tradition as well. In "Just Wondering Why," "Waiting for a Message," and several other numbers the brothers interweave their voices around minor and sharp chords in a way that portends the Everly Brothers' similar vocal approach. Like the Stanley Brothers, Jim and Jesse emphasize vocals more than instrumentation, but unlike their Virginia neighbors aim for a higher, softer, and less dramatic singing style that produces a more aesthetic, less haunting quality. Part of this stems from their relative downplay of lyrical imagery in favor of a accentuation of vocal effect. With considerable shortsightedness, the record companies shunned Jim and Jesse in the mid-1950s, after the rock era began. Executives at labels with country divisions failed to see the appeal of the McReynolds brothers' cool vocal blend, most likely due to their identification with the bluegrass sound, which was viewed as retrogressive. Eventually, with the folk music revival of the 1960s, Jim and Jesse

gained the attention they so rightly deserved for their modernization of the pre-war progressive vocal and instrumental approach.³⁰

The Korean War halted the career of the McReynolds brothers in the early 1950s, after the army drafted Jesse in 1952. While in Korea, McReynolds teamed up with another musician transferred to the twenty-fourth division named Charlie Louvin. Forming a five-piece band, Louvin and McReynolds began touring officers' clubs and hospitals as members of Army Special Services in the Korean theatre. After the war, the two went their separate ways, both returning to the brother acts they established in the late forties. Like Jim and Jesse, the Louvin Brothers deserve a great deal of credit for modernizing the duet-sound in early 1950s, and they too faced a hostile recording industry in their quest to market their sound. The opposition the Louvins faced, however, stemmed less from their affiliation with bluegrass than their designation as a gospel act. Displaying a willingness to customize their sound with mainstream country instrumentation, the Louvins went on to become one of the most successful country acts of the latter half of the 1950s. In doing so, they and the Everly Brothers popularized country music harmonies among a widespread audience in a ways previously unfathomable.³¹

Charlie and Ira Louvin (né Loudermilk) grew up in northeastern Alabama, the same region that produced the Delmore Brothers. Their father played the old clawhammer style of banjo and their mother sang old ballads and sentimental pieces

³⁰ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 345; Artis, Bluegrass, 79.

³¹ Vinicur, Jim and Jesse: Bluegrass and More, 9.

around the house, but, as Charlie Louvin recalls, it was their mother's affiliation with church singing that made the most lasting impact on the brothers: "We were raised on religious music. Our mother was what they called a four-note sacred harp singer." As youngsters, they also became entranced with the sounds of the Blue Sky Boys, Delmore Brothers, and Bill and Charlie Monroe. Tellingly, they showed little interest in the records of Jimmie Rodgers. As they grew older and mustered up the courage to sing in public, they began performing at numerous community events. Meanwhile, Ira taught himself to play the mandolin by listening to Monroe Brothers' records. In 1942, they obtained their first radio spot on a small station in Chattanooga, juggling a daily show and personal appearances with their jobs at a local cotton mill. The duo drifted in and out of the business for the next two years before beginning their professional career in earnest in 1947, with a move to Knoxville. There they adopted their stage name and met a musician named Eddie Hill, who helped them secure a job on Memphis' WMPS. During their stay in Memphis, their songwriting talent drew the attention of publisher Fred Rose, who helped land them a recording contract. While they remained a popular radio act, their recording career did not show much promise until they signed with Capitol in 1952.³²

The Louvins' pre-Capitol sides reflected their radio repertoire, which interspersed secular songs with their popular gospel material. Instrumentally, they augmented their guitar/mandolin base with more contemporary electric guitar and

³² Charles K. Wolfe, Louvin Brothers: In Close Harmony (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 2-9; Charlie Louvin quoted in Ed Bumgardner, "Remaining Half of the Louvin Brothers Preserves the Legacy," Winston-Salem Journal 12 July 1987.

fiddle, creating a half-modern, half-traditional sound. As Charlie Louvin recollects, this tentativeness pushed them even further toward religious material:

We didn't have the instrumentation to do the modern day songs with all the rhythms, so we did the kind of songs that we thought would sound good with the instrumentation that we had to give 'em. And it just happened that they were either folk songs...or they were gospel songs.

Switching to Capitol, their lyrical repertoire became almost completely gospel-orientated, with a sentimental piece or topical number occasionally thrown in. Some of Nashville's finest musicians (including Chet Atkins and Tommy Jackson) provided the musical backdrop for their early Capitol sides, which featured Ira Louvin's mandolin solos as well as electric guitar and fiddle interludes. Vocally, many of their recordings from this time period reflected the influence of the Blue Sky Boys (e.g. "No One to Sing For Me" and "Robe of White"). The Biblical fundamentalism pervasive in songs like "Broad-Minded" and "The Family that Prays (Shall Not Part)" demonstrate the Louvins' lyrical debt to the Bollicks. In several cases, they apply this traditional religious approach to the contemporary social scene, with a song like "Broad-Minded" standing as a variation of "I'm S-A-V-E-D" (popularized by Karl and Harty and the Blue Sky Boys) updated in a post-war setting. In "The Great Atomic Power," the Louvins offer one of the most effective country gospel songs of the post-war period, utilizing the ubiquitous threat of nuclear destruction to impress upon listeners the imperative of reconciling with God. As historian James C. Cobb explains, "(it) was the musical equivalent of the camp meeting evangelist's last-ditch

effort to employ fear of 'this man's invention that it called atomic power' as the instrument of salvation." Despite the effectiveness of their religious tunes, however, the Louvins realized that their career would never progress so long as they remained a gospel-centered act. To make matters worse, their use of string instruments limited their acceptance in the gospel field. Charlie Louvin describes the brothers' musical predicament: "We were caught in the middle. Gospel musicians shied away from us because we played mandolin and guitar. Country didn't want us because we had sung so much gospel." In 1955, the brothers brazenly gambled their future by abandoning their emphasis on religious material in favor of secular material. The decision turned out to be a wise one, as they scored several Top Ten hits in the late 1950s with songs that interwove their high harmonies with more mainstream instrumentation. As Jim and Jesse brought the Delmore Brothers/Blue Sky Boys harmonic technique to bluegrass, the Louvins helped integrate the vocal style into modern country music.³³

In many ways, the rise of the post-war duets symbolized the passing of the torch from a pre-war generation of singers popularizing rural southern singing styles

³³ Wolfe, , In Close Harmony, 4, 10-13; Eddie Stubbs, Richard Weize and Charles Wolfe, "The Louvin Brothers," The Louvin Brothers, 42-43; Charlie Louvin, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 30 November 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 214-215; James C. Cobb, "From Rocky Top to New York City: Country Music and the Economic Transformation of the South," You Wrote My Life: Lyrical Themes in Country Music, eds. Melton A. McLaurin and Richard A. Peterson (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1992) 70-71; Bumgardner, "Remaining Half of the Louvin Brothers Preserves the Legacy"; Charlie Louvin quoted in Suzy Lowry Geno, "Charlie and Ira—The Louvin Brothers," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 17, No. 9 (March 1983): 16; Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996) 190.

through the use of radio technology to a post-war group integrating folk traditions with contemporary music trends. Both groups appealed predominantly to rural white southerners with an affection for familiar instrumentation and relatable lyrical subject matter. The post-war duets and alternative string bands furnished rural listeners with sounds and lyrical expressions that appealed to their traditional musical interests without sounding particularly old-fashioned. In general, the bluegrass band focused on musical innovation within the parameters of acoustic instrumentation while the duet-based groups applied more novel musical and progressive vocal techniques to rural lyrical imagery. Lyrically, most of these acts focused on devout themes that reflected the importance of religion in southern life as well as indicating a sign of the times.

The religious impulse of rural southerners in the mid-twentieth century stemmed predominantly from two centuries of Protestant upheavals. The awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries effectively democratized American religion, while in the South, the Great Revival of the early 1800s roused rural southerners to the vision of universal salvation preached by the Methodist and Baptist sects. Evangelical movements of the 1800s instilled in southern religion an emotional power as well, heightened by the Pentecostal surge late in the century. Music and religion increasingly intertwined in the South, particularly after the gospel movement made its way to the region in the late 1800s. As with so many other aspects of American culture, the southern version of the evangelical and gospel movements took on distinctly regional qualities. W. J. Cash describes the manifestation of the Divinity

that developed in the southern environment: "The God demanded was an anthropomorphic God...a God who might be seen, a God who had been seen. A passionate, whimsical tyrant, to be trembled before, but whose favor was the sweeter for that." Songwriters within the southern gospel movement espoused this vision with the emotional urgency of evangelical revivalism, stressing self-reproachment, reconciliation, and the promise of a glorious afterlife. Nationwide, the religious fervor of the nineteenth century abated somewhat in the first decade of the twentieth century, with church membership increasing only slightly, from forty-three to forty-eight percent between 1910 and 1940. Between 1940 and 1950, however, this figure rose to fifty-five percent, with the millennial and Pentecostal sects showing particularly substantial growth. Historian William G. McLoughlin, Jr. attributes this surge to a series of historical shocks, beginning with the Depression and culminating in the social upheavals and elusive peace of World War II. Not surprisingly, the threat of nuclear war loomed large, with many evangelists like Arkansas native Asa A. Allen ominously pointing to the time when "a great black cloud in the form of a skeleton reaches its tentacle arms toward America to embrace her in the embrace of death." Radio listeners in the South demonstrated a decided preference for religious programs in the mid-late 1940s, with post-war traditional acts responding by including numerous religious/gospel selections into their radio and recording repertoire.³⁴

³⁴ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 10-13; W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (1941; Vintage Books, 1991) 58; George Lipsitz, Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 261; William Gerald McLoughlin, Jr., Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1959) 472-481; Asa A. Allen quoted in David E.

Songs with religious overtones never came close to dominating the charts, but they did make up thirty percent of the recorded output of the post-war traditionalists analyzed for this study. Many country music performers grew up listening to gospel groups at home and in church. Some, like Johnny Cash, attended Pentecostal services that mixed fire and brimstone eschatology with musical interludes: "I learned to sit through the scary sermon; just to hear the music: mandolins, fiddles, bass, banjo, and flat top guitars. Hell might be on the horizon, but the wonderful gospel-spiritual songs carried me above it." The Pentecostal bent made its way into several country songs of the period, many apocalyptic in nature (i.e. selections using the atomic metaphor). One country group more than any other, however, captured the images of southern religion described by both W. J. and Johnny Cash. In combining Pentecostal proselytizing with a Roy Acuff singing style and progressive instrumentation, the Bailes Brothers put to words and music the post-war apprehensions of thousands of southerners.³⁵

Harrell, All Things are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1975) 97; Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper and Row, Inc. 1964) 771; Roy L. Moore, Mass Communication Law and Ethics (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1994) 372; "Strong Faith With Fans, Sacred Music is Just That," The Billboard Vol. 67, No. 23 (21 May 1955): 22.

³⁵ Johnny Cash, liner notes, Unchained, American Recordings CD CT 69404, 1996; for a discussion of country music's takes on post-war socio-political developments and the advent of the atomic age see Jens Lund, "Socio-Political Aspects of Right Wing Country Music," MA thesis, Bowling Green State University, 1975, and Charles K. Wolfe, "Nuclear Country: The Atomic Bomb in Country Music," Journal of Country Music Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 1978): 4-21.

Johnnie, Walter, Homer and Kyle Bailes grew up near Charleston, West Virginia in the 1920s and 1930s. The brothers began performing on radio with other musicians and in various sibling combinations in the mid-1930s, but they did not gain notoriety in the region until Johnnie and Walter moved to WSAZ in Huntington in 1942, with Homer and Kyle appearing with them occasionally. Johnnie and Walter remained there during the war, until 1944, when Roy Acuff came to the region. Impressed with the duo's talent, he arranged their move to WSM, where they played an early morning show in addition to performing on the Opry. In Nashville, Homer rejoined the group after his discharge from the Army and Kyle became the brothers' manager/agent. They also added mandolinist Ernest Ferguson and steel guitarist Shot Jackson to the fold during this period. They relocated again in 1946, this time to Shreveport, where they became charter performers on the Louisiana Hayride, which soon became a major barn dance program in the late 1940s. The Bailes Brothers became very popular in the Texas-Arkansas-Louisiana region even as they went through various personnel changes, including the departure of Walter in 1947 and Homer in 1949, who both left to join the church. When Homer left, Walter returned to work with Johnnie as a gospel duet in the early 1950s, until the Bailes Brothers disbanded as an active performing group in 1956.³⁶

³⁶ Bailes Brothers, interview with Ronnie F. Pugh, Nashville, 9 June 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Ivan M. Tribe, "The Bailes Brothers," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 9, No. 8 (February 1975): 8-12; Ivan M. Tribe, Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984) 110-112; Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night": A History of Louisiana Country Music, diss., Tulane University, 1995. (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 404-405, 411-412; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 58, No.

In musical style, the Bailes Brothers' first recordings (from February 1945) resemble the sound of the pre-war progressives. Recorded before they added electric steel guitarist Shot Jackson to the group, these early sides predominantly feature the duet vocals of Johnny and Walter, the mandolin playing of Ernest Ferguson, and the old-time fiddling of Del Heck. The brothers' singing, open throated and emotionally charged, owes a great deal of influence to Roy Acuff, particularly on "As Long As I Live." Acuff made a distinct impression on Walter Bailes the first time he hear him: "He was telling me exactly how I was feelin'." Lyrically, little distinguishes the secular numbers of the session from contemporary country. The brothers' own individual lyrical style begins to surface on religious numbers like "The Drunkard's Grave" and especially on "Dust on the Bible," songs that center on man's sinfulness and a perceived lapse of religious conviction in society. With their old-time musical feel and preachy lyrics, Columbia Records hesitantly released the singles, well aware of the popularity of bouncy and western flavored records at the time. A Billboard review of "Dust on the Bible"/"I've Got a One-Way Ticket to the Sky" probably reinforced their ambivalence: "The two Bailes boys, getting string band accomps, sing in backwoods gospel style for both of these religious folk tunes...Swell for the rocking chair brigade, but they don't spend nickels." Switching to the King label and adding Jackson to the fold, the group simultaneously sounds old-timey and modern.

11 (16 March 1946): 112; "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 26 (26 June 1948): 110; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 214.

Encouraged by King executive Syd Nathan, Jackson's steel guitar solos add considerable punch to a session revolving around gospel material. "He'll Strike You Down," "Building on the Sand," and "We're Living in the Last Days Now" offer chilling interpretations of post-war society's wayward stride and the ultimate price that must be paid. Secular numbers like "Broken Marriage Vows" and "Everybody Knew the Truth But Me" pale in comparison to the vocal intensity displayed on "Daniel's Prayer." The Pentecostal fervor carried over to their 1947 recordings for Columbia. "Do You Expect a Reward From God" represents one of their most effective sermon-like songs while "Come to the Savior" offers a haunting interpretation of an old Blue Sky Boys' tune. In the background, Jackson and Ferguson exchange solos in a musical tug-of-war between older and newer sounds while Homer Bailes' eerie fiddling accentuates the apocalyptic feel of the proceedings. After the group fragmented in the late 1940s, Johnnie and Walter reunited in 1953 for a series of gospel sides for King. What these last records lack in musical intensity that make up for in lyrical quality and vocal sincerity, most notably on "Goodbye, Hallelujah, I'm Gone." In their prime, the Bailes Brothers offered a unique perspective on post-war social developments, free of the restrictions imposed by mainstream trends towards more light-hearted lyrical material. Their sole musical concession to contemporary sounds, Jackson's steel guitar, only reinforced the fervor of their performances.

The fact that the Bailes Brothers' popularity extended from the backwoods of Virginia to the cities of the Southwest offers testament to the widespread apprehensions felt by members of a post-war southern society in flux.³⁷

The changes in southern society precipitated by World War II filled its rural inhabitants with a forbidding sense of their future. As C. Vann Woodward points out: "The traditionalist who...watched the Bulldozer Revolution plow under cherished old values of individualism, localism, family, clan, and rural folk culture...felt helpless and frustrated against the mighty and imponderable agents of change." Many who found work in cities or served in the armed forces knew deep in their hearts that they could never return to their pre-war ways of life. In some cases, they simply did not wish to and in others they could not if they wanted. World War II made the world a radically different place for many Americans, but for rural southerners in particular. Before the war, they lived in communal hamlets, relatively isolated from the cultural impositions of urban and American society. During the war, many left the countryside (both involuntarily and by choice) to join in the national crusade or to try to better their lives. As historian Jack Kirby points out, those moving to cities experienced a transition from a sense of community to a sense of alienation, from interpersonal to impersonal relationships. Many constructed support systems in cities and maintained contacts with family members back home. Transplanted southerners in northern cities and the armed forces obstinately clung to their culture in the face of social upheaval.

³⁷ Bill C. Malone, The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1981) 36; Bailes Brothers interview; "Record Reviews," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 47 (23 November 1946): 30.

They would adapt, but not succumb to a foreign way of life that they viewed as aberrant. Country music served as one of the primary weapons in their struggle to maintain their southern identity. Country music, however, was also changing. Over the course of its nationalizing process, it increasingly drifted away from its southern and rural roots. Western swing and the Texas triumvirate symbolized the shift in country music's creative nucleus to the urban Southwest. To many rural southerners, mainstream country music at the end of World War II no longer appealed to them lyrically or musically.³⁸

The post-war traditionalists emerged in the mid-forties to fill the void created by country music's nationalization. Part reactionary and part innovative, the post-war traditional impulse offered an old-world view in a fresh musical setting. It celebrated country folk traditions but recognized their musical obsolescence. The alternative string bands blended improvisational instrumental techniques into their rudimentary country band sound, infusing it with a vigor and soulfulness tantamount to western swing's high-spiritedness. Mournful, religious, and pastoral lyrics, together with a steadfast adherence to acoustic instrumentation affirmed bluegrass groups' association with the countryside. Other performers like Molly O'Day and Grandpa Jones entrenched themselves in Appalachian traditions, finding both humor and tragedy in mountain and folk culture. Playing old-time music in an old-time style, they appealed

³⁸ C. Vann Woodward, The Burden of Southern History (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) 10; Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, 328-333; Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 297.

to listeners whose tastes had not changed over the course of the war. Finally, a generation of duet-based acts emerged that built upon the progressive tradition, subtly augmenting their vocal harmonies with novel instrumentation. They too used rural lyrical imagery to lend an unpretentious feel to their recordings, occasionally infusing a familial and religious piety that tended to reinforce rural, communal norms. Together, the post-war traditionalists offered cultural continuity to a generation of rural southerners dealing with social dislocation and a foreboding future.³⁹

While the post-war traditionalists maintained a loyal following, they essentially remained an underground movement in the eyes of the country music industry. Acts that readily incorporated elements of popular music and electric instrumentation during the war continued their domination of the country music charts in the latter half of the 1940s. Many transplanted rural southerners and new country listeners across the United States embraced the new sounds. While some attended the increasing number of folk music parks in the Northeast and Roy Acuff's newly constructed Dunbar Cave in Clarksville, Tennessee as a means to reacquainting themselves with their rural past, most accepted their urban lot and the new sounds coming from radios and jukeboxes. The country music acts that appealed to these predominantly urban listeners, however, splintered over the implementation of electric instruments in country music and degree of interfusion with other musical genres. Generally speaking, those most enchanted by the western swing innovation mixed Southwestern instrumentation with a bluesy beat for dancing, while another group

³⁹ Tribe, Mountaineer Jamboree, 153.

followed in the footsteps of country-pop fusion of World War II to create a softer, more listener-orientated music. A third faction accepted southwesterners' use of the electric steel guitar but chose to retain much of the rural feel of pre-war country music. Their records appealed to neo-urbanites seeking a music that reflected the southern folk tradition but recast it for the urban environment. In time, this type of music acquired the "honky tonk" appellation.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ "Folk Parks to Take Foothold in Ohio, South This Summer," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 23 (5 June 1948): 38; Ford Rush, "Acuff's Dunbar Cave Rich in Lore, Visitors," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 49 (5 December 1953): 54.

CHAPTER FIVE—HONKY TONK BLUES AND THE PROMOTIONAL BLITZ: COUNTRY MUSIC AT THE DAWN OF THE SUNBELT ERA

The urbanizing forces of World War II filled rural southerners with both hope and apprehension. Many joined the 15.3 million American civilians moving to cities during the war in search of defense industry jobs. The lure of a steady paycheck and escape from the agricultural quagmire proved especially enticing to younger southerners attracted to urban amenities and the promise of a brighter future. Those returning from military service also had good reason to believe that the city offered economic advancement and social mobility. Some migrants displayed an eagerness to assimilate into urban culture, while others clung to the culture of their youth, one grounded in folkways and a provincial worldview. Regardless of the degree to which they wanted to acclimate to their new surroundings, southern migrants faced similar challenges. Those who traveled to northern urban areas struggled with "hillbilly" and "hayseed" stereotypes. Jack Kirby points out that in Ohio, natives distinguished between "southerners," well-dressed migrants who used regional colloquialisms sparingly and "briars," who looked and spoke in a decidedly rural, southern fashion. On the Near West Side of Chicago, southern migrants constructed a social enclave to combat native prejudices. As noted in Chapter 2, southern folk moving to urban areas within their own region faced similar cultural intolerance.¹

¹Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988) 155; David R. Goldfield, *Promised Land: The South Since 1945* (Arlington Heights, H. Davidson, Inc., 1987) 6-10; Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 326-328; Lewis M. Killian, "The

As a rule, the new urban order presented southern migrants with a variety of economic and social obstacles. For one thing, the nature of both work and interpersonal relationships changed, with migrants having to grow accustomed to time clocks and peculiar anonymity; for another, the new urban existence often clashed with the tenets of their rural-orientated faith. City life pushed and pulled against traditional mores, with migrants left to reap the whirlwind of the South's catapult into modernity. Commenting on the region's phenomenal wartime expansion, a contemporary observer noted: "The South...will emerge from (the) war with more social change and more unfinished business than any other section of the country."²

In the mid-late 1940s, southern cities bustled with economic activity as local chambers of commerce in the South focused on cementing the gains made possible by outside investments during the war. Industry soon came to rival agriculture as the South's primary business pursuit. When industrial production workers began to outnumber farmers late in the decade, the region's rural ethos suffered a symbolic defeat. As an exponent of southern folk culture, country music soon adapted to its listeners' transplantation to urban

Adjustment of Southern White Migrants to Northern Urban Norms," Social Forces Vol. 32, No. 1 (October 1953): 66.

² Goldfield, Promised Land, 8-10; Pete Daniel, "Going Among Strangers: Southern Reactions to World War II," Journal of American History Vol. 77, No. 3 (December 1990): 898; H. Clarence Nixon, "The South After the War," Virginia Quarterly Review Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer 1944): 321.

areas.³

When country music moved to the city it initially retained much of its penchant for lyrical realism while adapting to the new urban environment. As such, country music songwriters replaced pastoral imagery with portraits of the new social landscape. As the post-war traditionalists clung to their rural past, country music performers who spoke for the displaced persons entering the cities examined the psychological effects of the rural/urban dichotomy. Most of the time they did so without directly commenting on urbanization, but rather on its emotional aftermath. In the cities, many former rural dwellers congregated at taverns, termed "honky tonks," where they sought solace from the traumas induced by their physical separation from their folkish roots. Honky tonk performers addressed the realities encountered by country music listeners facing the alienating repercussions of post-war urbanization and industrialization. Their songs were "real" in the sense that they captured the dissolution of the pre-war lives of returning veterans and neo-urbanites. Additionally, they tapped into the personal strains of urban newcomers who found true love and personal contentment elusive. Ironically, honky tonkers donned western attire when singing about the effects of urban alienation; they did so primarily as a means to giving their transplanted hillbilly music more respectability and enhancing its entertainment value. Most often, they sang about severed relationships, with

³ Goldfield, Promised Land, 28; James C. Cobb, Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877-1984 (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1984) 42-52; Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, xiv; Carl Abbott, The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) 101.

selections of this type (categories 2, 3, and 4) accounting for nearly half of their lyrical repertoire in the post-war decade. In this, they resembled the progressive performers, but in their manner of approaching the subject, they differed considerably. Honky tonk love laments display less pleading for reconciliation than they do pensive soul-searching on the emotional ramifications of a breakup. More than any other sub-genre, honky tonk explores feelings of guilt over infidelity and other moral trespasses. Unlike the post-war traditionalists, honky tonk performers resign themselves to life in an urban-industrial society however incompatible it may seem with their rural upbringing. Their resignation often fosters self-pity, occasionally reflected in songs about drinking and general disillusionment, but more often expressed through tales of estranged love. As time wore on, a new generation of performers emerged that concentrated less on self-meditation than on transfusing light-hearted material into what later became known as the honky-tonk sound.⁴

Like other country sub-genres, honky tonk is distinguishable by certain vocal and musical criteria. As the progressives built upon the stringband and domestic traditions and the post-war traditionalists concentrated on fusing these musical conventions with novel instrumentation, the honky-tonkers applied the vocal style of progressives like Roy Acuff and Jimmie Davis to a restrained version of the western swing musical motif. Honky tonk performers embraced the electric steel guitar and the

⁴ Ronnie F. Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 322; Bill C. Malone, Honky-Tonkin' (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1983) 5; Joli Jensen, The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization, and Country Music (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998) 27-29.

single-string solos of Floyd Tillman and early Ernest Tubb guitarists as well as the expressiveness of Texas fiddling. They also occasionally adopted the twin-fiddle sound as well as western swing's heavy, danceable beat. Honky tonk groups, however, differed considerably from their western swing counterparts in their implementation of these musical techniques. Primarily, they played country music in a style much closer to blues than jazz or American popular music, with their solo passages more economical and evocative in nature. Secondly, they transposed western swing's emphasis on instrumentation and downplay on vocal. In honky-tonk, musicians accent but never overshadow the singer. Singers, meanwhile, express lyrics in a more emotional style, creating a sense of intimacy between performer and audience similar in fashion to the Delmores and the Stanley Brothers. In sum, honky tonk lies somewhere between a string band's adaptation to an urban environment and a western swing group's acculturation to a tavern setting. It arose from the need to reconcile country music's folk traditions with its urban inclinations and it symbolized the accession of the club over the schoolhouse as the primary haunt for country music's dislocated audience in the post-war period.⁵

At first sight, the honky tonk appeal seemed curious to some, magnetic to others. Bill Porterfield's description of a typical east Texas honky tonk in the 1940s

⁵ Rich Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," The Country Music Book, ed. Michael Mason (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1985) 184; Joe Carr, Prairie Nights to Neon Nights: The Story of Country Music in West Texas (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1995) 62; Bill C. Malone, "Honky Tonk: The Music of the Southern Working Class," Folk Music and Modern Sound, eds. William R. Ferris and Mary L. Hart (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982) 123.

provides an example of the establishment's milieu:

As you entered, the front part of the building had a bar on the right side and on the left, tables and chairs and a couple of pool tables and marble machines and a shuffleboard. If you were hungry, you could get cold cuts and hot links at the bar, which only served beer and pop. If you wanted to dance, you had to walk through a gate in a little wooden fence that cut off the dancefloor from the front. During the day there was no cover and you could dance to the jukebox as long as you had the nickels and quarters. At night, if the house band was playing you paid a dollar to get in...Honky tonks were cheap places frequented by (lower)-class...customers. They were not particularly dangerous places, although some were. If a fight broke out, the best bet was to keep dancing.

Members of the white southern working class frequented honky tonks for a variety of reasons. A study conducted between 1947 and 1949 on southern migrants in the North described patronage of "hillbilly taverns" in Chicago as "a form of voluntary segregation," a means to reaffirming their identity in an urban environment characterized by impersonal and anonymous relationships. Whether in the North or the South, country music listeners went to clubs for a variety of other reasons as well, as John Morthland explains:

Honky tonks provided a gathering spot, a community center...Men went there to decompress after a hard day at a demanding job: to drink and celebrate, to

drink and commiserate, to find a woman, to dance, to swap lies, to get in fights, to cut up in general.

For music, club owners initially booked bands that played for tips or for a portion of beer sales. In the early days of the Texas honky tonks, these groups (sometimes consisting of just a fiddler and guitarist) played acoustically, but many soon discovered the need to adopt vocal and instrumental electric amplification in order to be heard above the natural sounds of socializing. By the mid-1940s, as Bill Malone points out, "most of the bands featured the rhythm guitar played in a percussive, closed-chord style, an electric steel guitar, an electric lead...a fiddle, a bass (both acoustic and electric) and often a piano." As an alternative to hiring a band, economically minded owners of small clubs simply installed a jukebox to provide musical background; they too found selections with a heavier beat to be more popular among the nightlife crowd. In the decade after World War II, the popularity of jukeboxes and honky tonks grew hand in glove, with coin machine operators becoming the country music industry's biggest consumers and suppliers of music.⁶

⁶ Bill Porterfield, The Greatest Honky-Tonks in Texas (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1983) 16; Killian, "The Adjustment of Southern White Migrants to Northern Urban Norms," 66-67; John Morthland, "Honky Tonk Music: The Raw Sound of Hard Country," Country Music Vol. 5, No. 10 (July 1977): 42; Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 154-155; Malone, Honky Tonkin', 5-6; Colin Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1994) 125; Russell Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven: The American Popular Music Business in the Twentieth Century (1988; New York: Da Capo Press, 1996) 305; Steve Schickel, "Acceptance of C & W: Jukes in Big Role for Passing Word," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (22 May 1954): 28.

While bands and jukeboxes provided the pounding heartbeat for honky tonks, club patrons gave the cavernous establishments their souls. They could be jovial one moment and cantankerous the next. Some turned to violence for recreation, others to vent their frustrations. Huey Meaux, who played the nightspots with George Jones in the late forties, points out that many patrons "honky tonked" to escape the drudgeries of everyday life: "In them days, all you did was went to dancehalls and drank beer and fought all night, 'cause there was no other sports to do in them days. And that was the name of the game: who was the best fighter." Not surprisingly, honky tonks soon acquired a reputation as places for upstanding citizens to avoid. In the early 1940s, Senator George Moffett of Texas sponsored a bill that called for the revocation of liquor licenses at places that allowed "conduct, lewd, immoral or offensive to public decency." Moffett aimed the bill at clubs officially labeled "honky-tonks," places that permitted the following social practices:

The use of or permitting the use of loud and vociferous or obscene, vulgar or indecent language. The exposure of person or permitting any person to expose his person. Rudely displaying or permitting any person rudely to display a pistol or any other deadly weapon in a manner calculated to disturb the inhabitants of such place. Solicitation of any person for coins to operate musical instruments or other devices. Solicitation of any person to buy drinks or beverages for consumption by the retailer or his employees. Intoxication on licensed premises (licensed to sell alcoholic beverages) or permitting any intoxicated person to remain on such premises. Permitting entertainment

performances, shows or acts that are lewd or vulgar. Permitting solicitations of persons for immoral or sexual purposes or relations.

Many taverns and dancehalls fit one of all of these criteria, but it seems likely that the bill (signed by Governor Coke Stevenson in 1943) sought to close some of the more dangerous establishments.⁷

Musicians who played the rougher honky tonks considered themselves lucky if they made it through a night unscathed. Carl Perkins describes his experience in these establishments:

I'm talking about rough places, where half the people went there to fight...And a lot of these places had chicken wire around the jukebox and us to keep the bottles from hitting—these guys actually had axe handles behind the bar and about four or five inches on the big end of the axe handle was bored out and poured full of hot lead.

Floyd Tillman similarly recalls playing the rough-spots in east Texas, "where you had to dodge beer bottles, and when the fights broke out you were supposed to speed it up and play the music real fast." Not all honky tonks were quite this rough, of course, with many employing bouncers to maintain a certain degree of tranquility. Floyd Tillman remembers at least one time, however, when this setup provided him with a false sense of security:

⁷ Huey Meaux quoted in Nick Tosches, "The Grand Tour," Journal of Country Music Vol. 16, No. 3 (1994): 22; "Texas Bill Defines 'Honky Tonks' for Officers' Guidance," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 27 (3 July 1943): 62.

When (a World War II vet/amputee put his head down on a table), the auxiliary police who worked the place went to take him out. I said, 'Hey, leave that guy alone, he's not hurting anybody,' but that didn't stop 'em at all. They just hauled him out. That really burned me up, so (I dedicated a song to him). That didn't stop 'em either. In fact, it made them so mad that they threw the guy out and then came back for me—lifted me off the bandstand and threw me out! And I was the guy putting on the dance! I'd rented the hall and hired those cops!

From the schoolhouse to the barroom proved a jolty trek for country music and its performers. Like the country music audience that journeyed from the countryside to urban areas, musicians who made the transition into the honky tonks faced certain perils in their pursuit of economic opportunity. Honky tonk performers' success paralleled the South's unyielding pull towards urbanization. As the musical equivalent of the rural/urban dichotomy, honky tonk flourished in the post war period.⁸

The honky tonk era symbolically began in February 1946, when Floyd Tillman recorded a Jerry Irby song entitled "Drivin' Nails in My Coffin." Tillman's interpretation of Irby's tale of a man driven to alcohol by lost love marked a turning point in country music as a modernization of the honky tonk hybrid developed in the

⁸ Carl Perkins quoted in Patrick B. Mullen, "Hillbilly Hipsters of the 1950s: The Romance of Rockabilly," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 86; Bob Claypool, "Floyd Tillman—Original Cosmic Cowboy," Houston Post 21 July 1979; Floyd Tillman quoted in *ibid.*.

late thirties and early forties. In the pre-war period, producers and musicians considered "honky tonk songs" music for dancing; accordingly, Al Dexter made light of the barroom experience in up-tempo tunes like "Bar Hotel," "Honky Tonk Blues," and "When We Go Honky-Tonkin'." During the war, Ted Daffan and Ernest Tubb blended brooding elements of traditional country lyricism with novel electric instrumentation to reconstruct the definition of a honky tonk song, with the jukebox popularity of their recordings indicating a changing of the guard. When Tubb began augmenting his rhythm guitar/lead guitar approach with a fiddle and steel guitar in the latter war years, the modern honky tonk genre began to take shape. Tillman's recording merged the lyrical starkness of a Ted Daffan tune like "Headin' Down the Wrong Highway" with the dark rumination of an Ernest Tubb song like "It Just Don't Matter Now" and set it to a fuller, western swing-like instrumental backdrop characterized by seering twin fiddles, Leo Raley's bluesy mandolin work, the pounding piano of Ralph Smith, and Tillman's own half-spoken vocal drawl. It marked a substantial turnabout for Tillman musically (who began as a western swing performer in the mid-thirties and moved closer to pop during the war years) and set the tone for his postwar portfolio. With its free-spirited instrumentation, "Drivin' Nails in My Coffin" represents less an archetypal honky tonk recording than it does a manifestation of the western swing-Daffan-Tubb nexus that brought the sub-genre to fruition. Nevertheless, Tillman deserves the credit for capturing the lyrical and musical spirit of honky tonk on his February 1946

recording.⁹

Many people tend to associate honky tonk with songs about drinking and infidelity. Less than ten percent of all songs released by "classic" honky tonk performers, however, deal with this subject matter. Floyd Tillman represents the only performer in the honky tonk sub-genre with a plurality of songs in category 4. No other honky tonk performer dealt more forthright or explicitly with the actual honky tonk atmosphere. Characters in Floyd Tillman songs live lonely, desperate lives; most turn to alcohol to cope with their forlorn existence, others seek sexual companionship, and some are consumed with self-pity. Tillman spins these tales in his unique half-spoken manner, skillfully using vocal inflections to convey the destitution of his characters. In "Sign on the Dotted Line" and "It's A Cruel, Cruel World for Me," husbands watch as their marriages fade away, ultimately ended by their wives' unfaithfulness. In "Take My Love With You," a wife leaves her husband for another man, taking the couple's baby as well. "This Cold War With You" stands as one of the most insightful portraits of a marriage besieged by mistrust while "Slipping Around" (and its sequel "I'll Never Slip Around Again") deals forthrightly with the consequences of marital infidelity. Characters in "Some Other World," "I'm Leaving This Old World Someday," and "You Made Me Live, Love and Die" stand on the brink of suicide or suffer interminably from broken hearts. "I Gotta Have My

⁹ Donna Fielder, "Honky-Tonk Melody Brought Dexter Fame," Denton Record-Chronicle 27 June 1980; Al Dexter Vertical File, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Adam Komorowski, "Floyd Tillman," Hillbilly Researcher No. 15 (1992): 18-22.

Baby Back” and “I Almost Lost My Mind” delve deep into the blues, with the latter featuring some particularly evocative guitar work from both Tillman and steel guitarist Herb Remington. Ultimately, Tillman’s characters turn to alcohol for solace, only to find no escape from haunting memories of abandoned love. In “A Small Little Town,” a man’s loneliness is compounded by the fact that the taverns close early, leaving him with little hope for finding a woman to share his troubles with or a bottle to sink himself into. The subject of “It’s Got Me Down” relinquishes all hope for finding a “nice girl” to settle down with, displaying a tinge of class-consciousness in his contempt for the attraction of wealth. In the absence of lasting love, characters in “Gotta Have Somethin’,” “I’ll Be Playing the Field,” and “I’ll Take What I Can Get” search for ephemeral, physical relationships. Taken together, Tillman’s songs paint a picture of honky tonk culture unparalleled in county music. Tillman was truly one of the genre’s first “outlaws,” electing to stay in the Houston area after the war instead of pursuing a more lucrative career in Nashville and continually writing songs that dealt with applicable, yet unspeakable issues. When “Slipping Around” appeared, some station refused to play it while the Lucky Star Hit Parade censored it. Tillman’s unnerving snapshots of honky tonk life may have made some listeners uncomfortable, but they endeared him to a generation of displaced southerners haunting the taverns and dancehalls in search of an elusive contentment.¹⁰

¹⁰ Komorowski, “Floyd Tillman,” 14-15; Claypool, “Floyd Tillman—Original Cosmic Cowboy”; “Five Years Ago This Week,” The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 11 (14 March 1953): 44.

While Floyd Tillman focused on the honky tonk experience, Ernest Tubb concentrated on the harsh realities of everyday life, often voicing the hopes and anxieties of a wartorn and emotionally disorientated country music audience. Tubb possessed neither a superlative voice nor a knack for lyrical imagery, but few performers could match his vocal sincerity and his uncanny ability to write and record songs that defined common apprehensions in a forthright manner. More than anything else, Tubb realized the importance of authenticity in the presentation and selection of songs: "If those of us in this field are not sincere, the audience seems to sense it immediately...If I don't feel a certain way about a song, I will not sing it."

Unpretentious and identifiable, Tubb's singing style paved the way to his success as a country music performer. Bill Porterfield grew up listening to Tubb and explains the singer's instantaneous appeal:

He can't sing any better than you and me...To hear Ernest was to hear your uncle, the one that lost his farm to the bankers and lost his heart to a good looking mama who treated him like dirt. It wasn't pretty singing, but Lord, it was real. Out of the old rock.

Commenting on his singing style and lyrical repertoire, historian Ronnie Pugh points out the underlying reason for Tubb's magnetism: "His concerns were their concerns, voiced without frill, without metaphor, without simile, in a sparse, rough-hewn, down-to-earth style...Listeners knew what he was singing about and identified with his

viewpoint.”¹¹

Born in Crisp, Texas, south of Dallas, in 1914, Ernest Tubb developed an interest in becoming a country music performer in his early teens, after hearing a Jimmie Rodgers recording. Tubb patterned his singing style after his idol's and began playing publicly at local square dances and parties in the early 1930s before landing on a small San Antonio radio station in 1933. With the assistance of Mrs. Jimmie Rodgers, he secured his first recording contract with RCA-Victor (the late singer's label) in the mid-thirties, but his career did not begin to flourish until he later signed with Decca in 1940. In November of that year, Tubb became a full-time performer when he moved to 5,000 watt KGKO in Fort Worth, where he developed a strong regional following. He soon secured a sponsor (Gold Chain Flour) and, on the strength of "Walking the Floor Over You," a spot on the Grand Ole Opry in early 1943. With a string of several successful singles (including "Time After Time," "I Wonder Why You Said Goodbye," "You Nearly Lose Your Mind," and "It's Been So Long Darling") and his popular tours and Opry appearances, Tubb became a household name throughout the South by the end of World War II.¹²

¹¹ Ernest Tubb quoted in Ronnie Pugh, "The Texas Troubador: Selected Aspects of the Career of Ernest Tubb," MA Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1978, 58; Porterfield, The Greatest Honky-Tonks in Texas, 24; Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 113-114, 318-319.

¹² Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 10-54, 64-68, 93-94, 100-103; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 155-156.

Ernest Tubb's last wartime sessions set the tone for his post-war output. The day before V-J Day, he recorded two songs that succinctly captured the ambivalent feelings of returning veterans: "It's Been So Long Darling" and "Should I Come Back Home to You?" In the former, a soldier expresses the hope that his wife will be waiting for him when he returns while in the latter he acknowledges the possibility that she has been unfaithful in his absence and ponders his response. The session marked the first time Tubb utilized the steel guitar on a full-time basis. Earlier attempts (e.g. "Our Baby's Book," "You May Have Your Picture") produced mixed results, but during the recording ban of 1944 Tubb worked out the new sound on several transcriptions he produced for the World Broadcasting System with steel guitarist Ray Head. At his first session of the honky tonk period on February 13, 1946, Head's guitar work complements Tubb's trademark vocals nicely (particularly on "I'm Free at Last"), while lead guitarist Jimmie Short's economical, high-gain solos indicate another distinct aspect of Tubb's post-war sound, with Tommy Paige and Billy Byrd carrying on the tradition in the late forties and early fifties. For the most part, Tubb retained the simple instrumentation that characterized the early post-war sides, occasionally adding piano, percussive "sock" rhythm guitar, and even subtle drumming. As with his war sides, however, his honky tonk era songs revolve primarily around electric lead guitar solos and his own singing.¹³

Lyrically, Tubb's most impressive songs of the post-war period focus on failed relationships, many taking place in a topical setting. The self-penned "Those Tears in

¹³ Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 365-373.

Your Eyes (Were Not for Me)" continues in the same vein as "Should I Come Back Home to You?," with a soldier returning to find his wife in love with another man. It was Tubb's rendition of the Carlisle Brothers' "Rainbow At Midnight," however, that established him as the country music spokesman for returning veterans. The song tells the story of a soldier on a ship returning home and focuses on his idyllic post-war dreams (i.e. a wife, children and a home in the country). Historian George Lipsitz couples it with Perry Como's "Till the End of Time" as a song that "laid claim to patriarchal promises," describing it as a "distinctively male fantasy." Many listeners related to the aspirations expressed in the song and found Tubb's interpretation of it genuinely appealing. Not surprisingly, the record sold around half a million copies.¹⁴

In spite of his limited vocal abilities, Ernest Tubb carried a wide range of material convincingly. While Tubb excelled at mid-tempo pieces about failed relationships, he also proved himself a very capable balladeer ("I Love You Because") and sentimentalist ("Give Me A Little Old-Fashioned Love"). For his honky tonk following, Tubb offered up songs like "I'm With a Crowd But So Alone," "Driftwood on the River" and two Cindy Walker selections ("Warm Red Wine" and "Two Glasses, Joe"). Tubb's acute interpretive abilities surfaced throughout the post-war period, lending a plaintive intimacy to Hank Thompson's "A Lonely Heart Knows" and adding weight to several Jimmie Rodgers' covers, including "Mother, Queen of My Heart" and "Why Should I Be Lonely." The Texas Troubadour astutely

¹⁴ George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 45-47; Pugh, *Ernest Tubb*, 111.

maintained his distinctive musical style throughout most of the postwar era, but he occasionally experimented with different sounds as well. In one of the most unlikely vocal collaborations in American music history, Tubb and the Andrew Sisters recorded together in early 1949 with surprisingly successful results. The vast majority of the Texas singer's duets with Red Foley produced less fruitful results (mainly due to trite lyrical material), but "Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age" worked well and demonstrated Tubb's adeptness at humorous material. Always attuned to his audience's lyrical tastes, Tubb focused on recording songs about failed relationships directly after the war and then moved to more light-hearted material in the early 1950s. Tubb succeeded by lyrically identifying himself with his audience and musically maintaining his own individual style. With a unique sound and a universal appeal, Ernest Tubb demonstrated more than any other performer the importance of connecting with an audience and accommodating to listeners' changing tastes. Few could match the authenticity of his vocal performances and the charm of his musical simplicity.¹⁵

As Ernest Tubb vocalized country music listeners' everyday concerns and Floyd Tillman sang about their struggles in the new urban environment, Hank Williams expressed their inner struggle to reconcile a traditional value orientation with the South's catapult into modernity. Williams brought to plain view the torments of southerners at odds with the twin blades of urbanization and industrialization. Wracked by inner demons and the enervating consequences of his own success,

¹⁵ Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 373-387.

Williams ultimately lost his personal battle with the debilitating forces of the Bulldozer Revolution. In his public search for peace, some viewed him as a hero while others saw him as a tragic figure doomed from the start. Sanctified by avid fans and anatomized by historians and sociologists, Hank Williams reasserted country music's rural, southern roots at a time when urban and western influences were pulling it in a different direction. No other country music performer contributed more to the genre's stylistic development in the period of its modernization.

Born in rural southern Alabama in 1923, Hank Williams grew up in an environment of economic hardship. His father, a World War I veteran and locomotive engineer, suffered from the debilitating effects of the war and entered a veterans' hospital around the time his son turned seven, effectively leaving Lillie Williams, a church organist, to raise her child alone. The two traveled to Greenville, where Hank Williams worked a series of odd jobs (selling peanuts, shining shoes, etc.) to augment the family's meager income. While in Greenville, the youngster also took the opportunity to learn the rudiments of guitar playing from a black street musician named Rufus Payne (a.k.a. "Tee-Tot"). Under Payne's instruction, Williams added bluesy rhythms to his appreciation of country music and familiarity with religious material. In 1937, the Williams family moved to Montgomery, where Hank began fine-tuning his public performance skills and appearing on local radio. From mid-1941 to mid-1942, listeners in the area heard Williams over Montgomery's WSFA singing Roy Acuff songs and other country music standards. The lure of the better-paying war industries led him to Portland, Oregon briefly before he settled in Mobile

for two years working for a shipbuilding company. Returning to Montgomery in late 1944, Williams began to earnestly pursue a career in country music, appearing at schoolhouses and beer joints in the area. Spurred by the success of his personal appearances and popularity of his radio show, Williams journeyed to Nashville in September 1946 to audition for Fred Rose, co-founder of Acuff-Rose Publications. Sufficiently impressed, Rose helped Williams secure a recording contract with Sterling Records. On the strength of his first recordings, Rose landed him a contract with a major label (M-G-M) in early 1947. Williams remained on WSFA until mid-48, when the publisher-producer convinced the management of the Louisiana Hayride (on 50,000 watt KWKH) to take a chance on the young musician with the wild reputation. The conservative Opry avoided Williams like the plague even after the singer topped the charts with his remake of "Lovesick Blues" in the spring of 1949. Eventually, Opry management acquiesced, beginning a stormy three-year relationship with Williams in mid-1949. Riddled by a chronic drinking problem and other personal woes, Williams lost his job with WSM in August 1952. He returned to the Louisiana Hayride, but continued to experience difficulty booking large shows, a development that relegated one of 1952's best-selling artists to the honky-tonk circuit. With a tragic inevitability, Williams died soon thereafter, on January 1, 1953.¹⁶

¹⁶ Roger M. Williams, Hank Williams (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1981) 6-8; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 12-37, 51-98, 251; Colin Escott, Hank Williams: The Original Singles Collection...Plus (New York: Polygram Records, 1990) 2-14; Bob Pinson, liner notes, Hank Williams, The First Recordings, Country Music Foundation LP CMF-007, 1986; Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996) 358; "Opry Bounces Hank Williams," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 34 (23 August 1952): 21.

Hank Williams' first recordings for the Sterling label (with a Western band named the Oklahoma Wranglers) demonstrate the young singer's debt to Roy Acuff, in both vocal style and lyrical makeup. On his first session (in December 1946), Williams sings three religious songs in the heartfelt Acuff style backed by a steel guitar-less sound predominantly centered around old-time fiddles and accordion rhythm. Williams' last session for Sterling (with several WSM staff musicians) introduced the steel as well as the percussive, "sock" rhythm electric guitar to Williams' sound, particularly on "Honky Tonkin." Merle Travis dates the percussive guitar style back to banjo players in Dixieland bands who used it to provide loud rhythm in the days before microphones. Chet Atkins, who played with Williams later in his career, explains the way guitarists of the forties utilized the playing method: "In this technique, one turns up the electric guitar to a very high volume and plays rhythm on the last four strings, while muting it at the bridge with the hand. The resulting sound is something like a plucking banjo." Lyrically, the session produced two more Acuff-esque numbers, a "Wabash Cannonball" clone called "Pan American" and the lovelorn "I Don't Care (If Tomorrow Never Comes)." With its carefree abandon and employment of electric instrumentation, "Honky Tonkin'," however, helped Williams distinguish himself from Acuff.¹⁷

¹⁷ Williams, Hank Williams, 22; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 52-54; Mark Humphrey, "Interview: Merle Travis, Part I," Old Time Music No. 36 (Summer 1981): 8; Chet Atkins with Bill Neely, Country Gentleman (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1974) 175.

At his first session with M-G-M Records in April 1947, Fred Rose had Williams record with several musicians from Red Foley's band. In terms of the lineage between country and rock, "Move It On Over" represents one of the most important country music recordings of the 1940s. In particular, Ernie Newton's aggressive, thumbing bass presages Bill Black's work with Elvis Presley. Williams borrows an old blues melody to spin a humorous tale of a man sent away by his wife after a late night out (presumably honky tonking). Other songs from the session owe more allegiance to Williams' rustic roots: "I Saw the Light," with Tommy Jackson's sawing fiddle and gospel lyrics reflects Williams's rural religious background while "Six More Miles" has a decidedly country feel to it as well.¹⁸

Williams continued to integrate country with blues, gospel and other rural-based genres throughout the remainder of his career with his own band, the Drifting Cowboys. He particularly excelled at blues-tinged numbers like "My Sweet Love Ain't Around," "Lost Highway," "Ramblin' Man," and "Long Gone Lonesome Blues." Few singers could immerse themselves in a song like Hank Williams and fewer still could convey the emotional torture of such numbers as "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" and "Cold Cold Heart" with as much vocal intimacy. Williams worked with a number of notable musicians, but their playing nearly always assumed a secondary role to the leader's singing. In fiddler Jerry Rivers and steel guitarist Don Helms, Hank Williams found skilled musicians who complemented his singing without distracting listeners from the lyrical emphasis of his songs. With their subtle

¹⁸ Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 61-63.

musical touches, the Drifting Cowboys helped transform their leader's individual blues into communal honky-tonk laments.¹⁹

Lyricaly, Hank Williams concentrated predominantly on songs about failed relationships, occasionally with a tinge of anger (e.g. "I Just Don't Like This Kind of Living") but more often with a sense of despair (e.g. "I Can't Help It (If I'm Still in Love with You)"). Characters in Hank Williams' songs are often grief-stricken and imprisoned in their loneliness (e.g. "I Can't Escape from You," "Take These Chains From My Heart"); lost love haunts them, particularly at night, and they yearn for a resolution that never materializes. Breakups leave them emotionally scarred with little hope of recovery (i.e. "You Win Again"). Under the pseudonym of "Luke the Drifter," Williams recorded several recitations that delved into more sentimental and moralistic material. "Help Me Understand" deals more forthrightly with the consequences of divorce than most country songs of the period, while "Men With Broken Hearts" provides an eerie glimpse into the hearts and minds of wandering souls. On up-tempo numbers, meanwhile, Williams' characters live life without fear of social judgement (i.e. "Settin' the Woods on Fire," "Hey Good Lookin'"). One can find little if any ambiguity in Williams' songs; the overwhelming majority of them leave little room for doubt as to the mindset of their characters. As Williams explains, most of his songs aim at encapsulating emotional experiences: "I listen to people and try to understand how they feel about things. Feelings about things, that's what songs should be about." Williams' unpretentious, heart-on-sleeve writing and singing

¹⁹ Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 118.

approach contributed more to his popularity than anything else. His songs and his life paralleled in many ways, both characterized by an emotional rollercoaster that left many wondering where the next turn would lead him. The country music audience listened to Williams, identified with him, rooted for him, and ultimately grieved for him as if he were a member of their own family. Only Jimmie Rodgers could sustain such a personal and intimate relationship with an audience. One of Williams' closest friends, Ray Price, sums up the singer's timeless attraction: "The man had it. He had the magic. He had the touch...(He and Jimmie Rodgers) had the heart."²⁰

In the wake of Hank Williams' death, both country music fans and the country music industry moved to consecrate the late singer. Disc jockeys who curtailed their broadcasts of Hank Williams' records in the months before his death suddenly began devoting two-hour segments to him. Sales of Williams' discs skyrocketed and a multitude of tributes appeared venerating the singer's contribution to country music. In Montgomery, 20,000 gathered at his funeral, among them, Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, and Webb Pierce. Red Foley sang "Peace in the Valley" and a who's who of country music performers joined together in a rendition of "I Saw the Light." In September 1954, Tubb, Acuff, Jimmie Davis and a throng of other artists returned to Montgomery for Hank Williams' Memorial Day(s), along with 200 disc jockeys and thousands of fans. At the climax of the two-day event, a crowd of 8,500 watched the unveiling of a huge marble memorial monument that officially transformed Hank

²⁰ Hank Williams quoted in Williams, *Hank Williams*, 4; Ray Price, interview with Hugh Cherry, California, 10 March 1967, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

Williams into a country music icon. The presence of Tennessee governor Frank Clement (as one of the principal speakers) symbolized Williams' widespread popularity and indicated mainstream southern society's recognition of the music of its white, working-class citizenry. In death, Hank Williams redeemed the slights against country music and the southern folk culture that gave birth to it.²¹

In the last five years of his life, Hank Williams' music followed its listeners from the rural routes to the city streets by splicing the South's folk cultural tradition within the exigencies of urban life. Williams' musical style emerged from the churches, the fields, the front-porch swings and the backroads of the rural South to become the sound of a society in transition. The southern working class identified with Williams because he drew upon their common experience and expressed feelings in a way that made individual problems seem less peculiar. Williams did not evoke a class-consciousness so much as he raised awareness of the universality of emotional afflictions. He encrusted country music with rural adornments at a time when it seemed overrun with urban embellishments. A honky tonk singer with a hillbilly heart, Hank Williams demonstrated that country music could adapt to city life without succumbing to

²¹ Nev Gehman, "Fans Clamour For Disks of Late Singer," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 3 (17 January 1953): 1, 25; "In-Pouring of Tributes to Williams Continues." The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 5 (31 January 1953): 15; Williams, Hank Williams, 20; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 243; Bailes Brothers, interview with Ronnie F. Pugh, Nashville, 9 June 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; "Hank Williams Day," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 40 (2 October 1954): 41-42.

urban culture.²²

Hank Williams' success spawned a number of country music performers who continued to work within the honky tonk paradigm, that is, the process of adapting pre-war country music to its new urban setting. In the aftermath of Williams' death, Ray Price emerged as the torchbearer of the rough-hewn, rural-derived honky tonk sound pioneered by Ernest Tubb and perfected by Hank Williams. In time, Price would merge that sound with western swing to create a distinct honky tonk style as danceable as it was barroom compatible.

Ray Price spent his early years on a farm in East Texas, where he grew up listening to Jimmie Rodgers and Gene Autry records. In 1937, around the age of eleven, his parents divorced, with the youngster moving to Dallas with his mother. While in high school, Price began performing in public, but gave little thought to a career in music, enrolling in a veterinary college instead. The war interrupted his studies, but he returned to the school in 1946, after spending two and a half years in the Marine Corps. Price remained interested in music, however, and in 1948 began appearing on Abilene radio. In 1949, after securing a regular spot on Dallas' Big D Jamboree, he decided to become a full-time musician. A demo of a friend's song that Price recorded brought the singer to the attention of producer Jim Beck, who secured the release of his first single on Bullet Records. Despite unimpressive sales, Price

²² Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 234-235; Steve Goodson, "Hillbilly Humanist: Hank Williams and the Southern Working Class," Alabama Review Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 1993): 109-114.

found an ally in Troy Martin, a talent scout of sorts for Columbia Records and the Grand Ole Opry. Price signed with Columbia in 1951, the same year he met Hank Williams, who invited him on a tour with the Drifting Cowboys. In early 1952, Price moved to Nashville and began appearing on the Opry. He continued to tour (and record) with the Drifting Cowboys after Williams' death, but eventually formed his own band, the Cherokee Cowboys, in 1954, with whom he worked out a unique style, characterized by multiple fiddles (played in single-string style), duet vocals, drums, a walking bass line and a shuffling beat. He went on to become one of the most successful county music acts of the 1950s and 1960s.²³

Ray Price's only release for Bullet Records gave no indication of his honky tonk future. In "Jealous Lies," he sounds more like a crooner, with the sweeping steel guitar in the background lending a definite country-pop touch to the record. At his first sessions with Columbia, a year later, Price continued in this vein, although "I Saw My Castles Fall Today" and "Until Death Do Us Part" have more a blues feel and "If You're Ever Lonely Darling" demonstrates the influence of Lefty Frizzell. After meeting Hank Williams, Price moved closer to his mentor's sound, evident especially on a version of Williams' "Weary Blues (From Waitin')." When Price relocated to Nashville from Dallas in 1952, the Drifting Cowboys began backing him on his

²³ Rich Kienzle, Ray Price and the Cherokee Cowboys: The Honky Tonk Years, 1950-1966 (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1995) 4,8; Ray Price interview; Mike Elswick, "Country Star Ray Price Travels World, But Likes East Texas Best," Longview News 12 June 1985; David Mankelow, "Ray Price," The Hillbilly Researcher No. 12 (n.d.): 13-14; Daniel Cooper, "Being Ray Price Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry," Journal of Country Music Vol. 14, No. 3 (1992): 24-26.

recordings. On "Talk to Your Heart," Price sings with more assuredness; with "Move On In and Stay" and "Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes," Price demonstrates his willingness to experiment with western swing fiddling and honky tonk piano (two elements not characteristic of Hank Williams' recordings). After Williams died, Price continued to record numbers with the Drifting Cowboys, with "You Always Get By" representing his most accurate imitation of the late singer. In late 1953, however, Price declared his independence with two numbers, "Release Me" and "I'll Be There." For continuity, Price retained several members of the Drifting Cowboys, but he augmented the sound with a drummer and a second fiddler, and for the first time flirted with the shuffling tempo he would later completely adopt on "Crazy Arms" (a huge hit in 1955). He also began using the full force of his strong tenor, allowing it to rise above the band's more voluminous sound and cut through the honky-tonk smoke. At his last sessions in Nashville before returning to Texas, Price cements his honky tonk/western swing synthesis on "I Could Love You No More" and "If You Don't, Somebody Else Will." By August, Price replaced the Drifting Cowboys with the Cherokee Cowboys, a Texas band with a decidedly southwestern feel. Tommy Hill, with Price during the transition, recalls how audiences east of the Mississippi River reacted to the new, fuller sound:

The first date that we played with the two fiddles and the whole big band with the suits and western hats and so forth was Roanoke, and we had a packed house...And we had eight, nine pieces, the band scared the hell out of (the audience). They just sat and looked like we were monkeys in a cage.

With the addition of Clifton Howard Vandevender (a.k.a. Van Howard) on vocal harmony in late 1954 and fiddler Tommy Jackson in 1955, the Cherokee Cowboys sound coalesced. With his new band and honky-tonk/western swing hybrid, Price discovered a way to survive the rock and roll onslaught. Just as Thompson kept western swing alive by adding elements of honky tonk, Price remained a redoubtable honky tonk force by embracing western swing.²⁴

Ray Price and the other honky tonk singers discussed above enjoyed widespread popularity in the postwar era because they captured the mood and ambivalent feelings of country music's male listeners. They spoke for audience members who migrated to cities during the war and struggled with the transition to urban life and returning veterans who faced a barrage of new problems. In addition to tussling with the mental adjustment of civilian life and an uncertain Atomic Peace, many American men returned to find the "Rainbow at Midnight" patriarchal vision delusive. Nationwide, 1.5 million servicemen married during the war, with the dramatic upsurge in weddings beginning shortly after the passage of the Selective Service Act. While husbands went off to war, women entered the work force, encouraged by the government and the media to contribute to the war effort. Consequently, many women entered previously male-dominated professions, both blue- and white-collar. Over five million women entered the labor force during the

²⁴ Kienzle, Ray Price and the Cherokee Cowboys, 6-21; Tommy Hill quoted in *ibid.*, 15; Cooper, "Being Ray Price Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry," 26; Richard Weize and Rich Kienzle, "Ray Price: The Bullet and Columbia Discography, 1950-1966," in Kienzle, Ray Price and the Cherokee Cowboys, 64.

war, an increase from one-quarter to over one-third. Nearly half of all women found employment at some point during national mobilization; three quarters of those who did expressed an interest in remaining in the work force after the war. Many women who discovered economic independence and novel employment opportunities exhibited a reluctance to relinquish the advancements they made during the war. In the South, female workers in Bessemer, Alabama protested the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company's dismissal of 430 women (on the grounds that they were "inclined to marry") by staging a demonstration. In entering and winning several stock car races in 1946, Louise Smith symbolized southern women's challenge of traditional gender roles.²⁵

Hasty marriages, wartime separation, and the redefinition of gender roles gave impetus to a wave of divorces in the post-war period. In 1945, one in three couples divorced, resulting in over half of a million marriage dissolutions. In early 1946, 200,000 veterans were involved in divorce proceedings, with the number of American divorces rising to 600,000 by the end of the year. The issue of wartime infidelity weighed heavy on millions of wartime wives and returning servicemen. A 1943 survey indicated that nearly one-half of young married women doubted the fidelity of their husbands. Men, meanwhile, returned to marriages and families dramatically altered by the war. After George Mintz and Susan Kellogg explain, "after worrying for years about defeating the Axis, now they worried about the fidelity of their wives,

²⁵ Mintz, Domestic Revolutions, 152-154, 161; Mary A. Bufwack, Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993) 142; Lipsitz, Rainbow at Midnight, 49-52, 268.

their unfamiliarity with their children, their economic prospects, and finding a niche in the post-war world."²⁶

The rapid transformation of American society precipitated by World War II, the upsurge in divorces in the post-war period, and the onset of the Cold War left millions of Americans reeling in the uncertainties of the times. In the South, transplanted rural dwellers and returning veterans filled the honky tonks in search of some escape from alienation and disillusionment. Ernest Tubb, Floyd Tillman, and Hank Williams spoke to their concerns and gave voice to their confusion. These and other honky tonk singers directly addressed previously veiled issues of divorce, infidelity, and alcohol abuse with vocal and musical styles that accentuated their listeners' mindset and accommodated their new-found new-found urban environment. As a sub-genre, honky tonk reasserted the male domination of country music that radio curtailed in the pre-war years; in the process, honky tonk alienated many of country's recently emancipated female listeners. Just as post-war American society pointed the scepter of blame for the nation's social ills at women, honky tonk offered a one-sided account of male suffering that often distorted the realities of male-female relationships in the mid-late forties. While the media pushed American women to the suburbs, however, a number of female country singers emerged in the post-war period that challenged prevailing claims of woman's culpability for failed marriages and the breakdown of the American family. Using honky tonk instrumentation as a musical

²⁶ Mark Humphrey, The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys: 1945-1949 (New York: Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., 1992) 25; Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 164; Mintz, Domestic Revolutions, 170-172.

backdrop, these women combated traditional female country music stereotypes and broke through the industry's male bulwark.²⁷

Southern women found an unlikely spokeswoman in Kitty Wells. Born Muriel Deason in Nashville, Tennessee, the "Queen of Country Music" grew up listening to the Grand Ole Opry, singing hymns in church, and attending the square dances her guitar-playing father played at. In 1936, while still a teenager, she began appearing on Nashville's WSIX with her cousin as the Deason Sisters. After marrying Johnnie Wright in 1937, she continued to work part-time in radio, moving with her husband to a variety of stations in the Southeast in the late thirties and early forties. As Wright recalls, Wells' occasional appearances on his show with Eddie Hill in Knoxville elicited quite a listener response: "She had that little tremor to her voice, and I think that's what sold her. Anyway, she started to draw more mail than any other person on the show." When Wright and Jack Anglin moved to Shreveport's Louisiana Hayride after the war, Wells began appearing more regularly with the group, both on record and on radio. In 1949, with the help of Chet Atkins, Wells recorded her first sides for RCA Victor, backed by Wright, Anglin, and the Smokey Mountain Boys.²⁸

²⁷ Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 166-167.

²⁸ A. C. Dunkleburger, Queen of Country Music: The Life Story of Kitty Wells (Nashville: Ambrose Publishing Inc., 1977) 12; Charles K. Wolfe, Kitty Wells: The Queen of Country Music (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1993) 2-4; Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 177-178; Johnnie Wright quoted in Walt Trott, "The Johnnie and Jack Story," Johnnie and Jack and the Tennessee Mountain Boys (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 8.

On her eight sides released on the RCA label in 1949 and 1950, Wells appears backed by traditional instrumentation. "Gathering Flowers for the Master's Bouquet," "My Mother," and "Don't Wait Till the Last Minute to Pray" all have an old-time feel, both in musical and lyrical approach. With its temperance message, "Death at the Bar" hints at Wells' later commentaries on honky tonk life, but "Love or Hate" (written by Jack Anglin) stands out as the sessions' most notable cut. The song tells the story of a strong woman who ultimately leaves her husband when he fails to keep his "promise" to her. In "I'll Be All Smiles Tonight," Wells' character shows more vulnerability, uncertain of how long the man she loves will stay with her, but willing to take the chance. Promoted half-heartedly by RCA-Victor, the records failed to sell substantially. As Chet Atkins explains, part of the reason for this lack of interest stemmed from established industry standards: "It wasn't because (the record companies) had any prejudice against women, they just didn't think they could make any money off them. No one ever had in the past and in those days women were confined by conformity." As Wright recalls, WSM executives similarly responded to Wells' presence in the Johnnie and Jack entourage: "Jim Denny...said the Opry didn't need a girl singer, so Kitty didn't work the Opry with us in that time period."²⁹

In 1952, Johnnie Wright convinced Decca's Paul Cohen to record his wife. Wells recalls, however, that she had little reason to be optimistic:

²⁹ Chet Atkins quoted in Wolfe, Kitty Wells, 4; Johnnie Wright quoted in Trott, "The Johnnie and Jack Story," 9.

In 1949, about the time Johnnie started recording with RCA, I sang gospel songs for them. But that was before a girl (any girl) had really got started in the recording field...After I left RCA and signed with Decca...I really thought it would be the same all over again.

At Wells' first Decca session (in May 1952), she once again appeared with Johnnie and Jack's backup band, at the time consisting of rhythm guitarist Eddie Hill, steel guitarist Shot Jackson, and fiddler Paul Warren. Under Cohen's suggestion, the band recorded an answer song to Hank Thompson's "Wild Side of Life" entitled "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels"; it offered a strong indictment of men's honky tonk ways and forthrightly pointed out men's role in facilitating adulterous relationships. Banned by NBC and Opry management, the song still managed to spring to the top of the charts in August and immediately bolstered Wells' career. As Robert Oermann points out, "the immense popularity of 'Honky Tonk Angels' transformed the teetotaling, nonsmoking, church-going Wells into a honky tonk heroine." Mary Bufwack notes that the success of the song also made an immediate impact on country music: "The popularity of Wells' lament about male victimization of women indicates a conscious acknowledgment of women's discontent in post-war America and an interest within the country audience in a dialogue about male-female behavior."³⁰

³⁰ Wolfe, Kitty Wells, 4-5; Kitty Wells quoted in Dunkleburger, Queen of Country Music, 14; Bob Pinson, "Discography: 1949-1958," in Wolfe, Kitty Wells, 24-25; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 328; Robert K. Oermann, "Honky-Tonk Angels: Kitty Wells to Patsy Cline," Country: The Music and the Musicians, eds. Paul Kingbury and Alan Axelrod (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988)

Not surprisingly, Wells recorded several other numbers in the early 1950s that explored the feminine side of the honky-tonk equation. In "Paying for the Back Street Affair" (another answer song), a woman finds out too late that the man she loves is actually married; in "After Dark," she tries to make her lover realize the scandalous consequences she faces in being the other woman. In both cases, men deceive their mistresses into thinking they are not married or that they will soon leave their wives. In "I Heard the Jukebox Playing," "Divided By Two," and "I'm a Stranger in My Home," Wells portrays wives with cheating husbands, left alone with babies to care for and broken hearts that never mend. In "Honky Tonk Waltz" and "You're Not Easy to Forget," lost love drives heartbroken women to the tavern, where they listen to country music and drink with other lovelorn souls, finding only temporal relief in brief encounters with men. The character in "I Don't Claim to be an Angel" expresses doubt that her husband will ever trust her because of her (presumably) honky tonk past and lays awake at night in her uncertainty. In a duet with Red Foley entitled "One By One," both husband and wife admit their mistakes and part ways knowing that they can never trust one another. Wells is most effective in the role of a strong woman who refuses to take a cheating husband back, most effectively depicted in "A Wedding Ring Ago" and "Cheatin's a Sin." The interplay of Paul Warren's old-time, breakdown style fiddling and Shot Jackson's dobro-like crying steel guitar accentuate Wells' smooth yet searing vocals to create an unmistakably honky tonk sound that

328; Mary A. Bufwack, "The Feminist Sensibility in Post-War Country Music," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 138.

simultaneously retains a rural feel. In breaking through the honky tonk barricade with her tales of feminine valiance and vulnerability, Kitty Wells ensured that country music would not slight women's perspective on the transformation of postwar southern society.³¹

The success of Kitty Wells opened the door for a number of other female country music performers. In the honky tonk field, Texas Ruby, Charline Arthur and Jean Shepherd emerged as other popular performers within the sub-genre. Ruby Agnes Owens (a.k.a. Texas Ruby) recorded several innovative (and outspoken) numbers from 1945-1947 that dealt forthrightly with infidelity and spousal recrimination, including "If You Don't Want Me, Set Me Free" and "You've Been Cheating on Me." In "Soldier's Return," she addresses the issue of relationships broken up by the war. Charline Arthur was country music's most irrepressible female in the late forties and early fifties. With a free-spirited stage presence and an attraction to brutally honest song material, Arthur never fit the mold of a female country singer or an Opry performer. She endured a rather stormy relationship with the Nashville establishment before returning to her native Texas in the mid-1950s. Before RCA-Victor dropped her, she recorded several historically important songs, including "Heartbreak Ahead," "The Good and the Bad," and "Kiss the Baby Goodnight." On the last two numbers, her singing exudes a sexuality uncommon in contemporary country circles. The publication of Alfred Kinsey's Sexual Behavior in

³¹ "Gals From the Hills: Kitty and Goldie Start Country-Girl Search." The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 25 (20 June 1953): 1, 23.

the Human Female (1953) affirmed the realistic quality of Arthur's repertoire. The report declared that half of all women surveyed had sex before marriage and that one-quarter of married women committed infidelity. Jean Shepherd approached the issues of female sexuality and infidelity as well. In "Please Don't Divorce Me," she portrays a wife who storms out of the house after an argument with her husband; her "weakness" leads her into the arms of an old flame. In "Twice the Lovin', Half the Time," an unfulfilled woman turns to a stranger for sexual gratification without emotional baggage. "Don't Fall in Love With a Married Man" warns women of unfaithful married men's deceitfulness and "Two Hoops and a Holler" accurately captures the double standard between men's and women's behavior in an outspoken call for female solidarity in the battle of the sexes. Shepherd, Arthur, Owens and Wells were vanguards in the struggle for women's recognition in postwar country music. While their degree of commercial success varied, their very presence indicated the change that loomed on the country music horizon. Lyrically, they spoke out about the problems in women's lives and the male/female dichotomies that surfaced in the late forties and early fifties. Their utilization of honky tonk instrumentation symbolized their determination to have their side of the story heard within the male domain.³²

While female performers shifted the focus of honky tonk away from its myopic lyrical perspective, another group of singers based in the Southwest chiseled away at

³² Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 169-174, 185-186; Bob Allen, liner notes, Welcome to the Club: Charline Arthur, Bear Family LP BFX 15234, 1986; Mintz, Domestic Revolutions, 201.

the sub-genre's vocal rusticity. Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, Kitty Wells and the other honky tonk realists effectively used their voices to convey the stark authenticity of their lyrics. The Southwest vocalists who emerged in the postwar period concentrated more on employing the human voice as an emotional transmitter. Both groups of performers embraced the trebleness of the old-time fiddle and electric steel guitar that permeated the urban establishments equipped with jukeboxes, but the Southwest vocalists used a wider variety of singing techniques (from whispering to wailing) that accentuated atmosphere over lyrical context. Their success contributed greatly to the ascension of Texas as the honky tonk recording center in the decade after World War II.

As the area where western swing originated, the Southwest possessed a thriving music scene even before World War II. After the Texas swing bands moved west, honky tonk emerged as the primary musical export of the state. In cities like Houston and Dallas, western swing and honky tonk acts enjoyed a peaceful coexistence, with enough interest in both to fill both dancehalls and honky tonks. As records gained in popularity after the war, many of these performers strove to get contracts with major labels. Unfortunately, the majors continued to focus their efforts on established performers, leaving many acts dependent on club appearances for their income. Invariably, independent labels and studios arose that sought out popular regional performers. These entrepreneurial operations concentrated on local preferences and operated on a grass-roots level, similar in organization to Jim Stanton's Rich-R-Tone operation. In Houston, Bill Quinn's Gold Star label emerged

as the first semi-successful independent in the Southwest when it released Harry Choates' "Jole Blon" in 1946. Another entrepreneur, Jim Beck, also recognized the lack of supply to meet demand, and set up a recording studio in Dallas. Through his association with KRLD (as an announcer), he developed an awareness of the popularity of country music acts on the Big D Jamboree and began gearing his recording efforts in this direction. On the strength of his demo pressings and recordings for independents like Bullet in Nashville and Cincinnati's King label, Beck soon developed a relationship with the majors as well. With slumping sales in its country music division, Columbia grew particularly interested in Beck's recordings in the early fifties. In the time before and after he stepped up as director of Columbia's country division following Art Satherley's retirement in the spring of 1952, Don Law worked closely with Beck in an effort to secure much-needed new talent for the label. Through his association with Beck (and with the help of Troy Martin), Law signed Ray Price and Lefty Frizzell, among others. In Frizzell, Beck and Law found honky tonk's next superstar and the most notable of the Southwestern vocalists.³³

Lefty Frizzell rivals Hank Williams for the distinction of country music's most influential male singer of the modernization period. Certainly, no country singer ever

³³ Kevin Coffey, Hank Locklin: Send Me the Pillow You Dream On (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 7; Charles K. Wolfe, Lefty Frizzell: Life's Like Poetry (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1992) 15-17; Daniel C. Cooper, Lefty Frizzell: The Honky-Tonk Life of Country Music's Greatest Singer (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995) 73; "Satherley Quits Columbia Job," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 23 (7 June 1952): 17; Charles K. Wolfe, Carl Smith: Satisfaction Guaranteed (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 8.

used his vocal abilities to greater effect. Frizzell experimented with all types of vocal inflections and word phrasing, slurring words and bending notes to give new meanings to familiar diction. He could turn the simplest lyrics into complex expressions with a curve of his voice or a slant in his phrasing. The directness of his lyrics only intensified the subtle power of his performances, instantaneously forging a bond with listeners drawn to his amicable voice. Merle Haggard describes the immediate effect of his performances: "He delivered every line in a song like Henry Fonda...absolutely believable...Every breath was authentic." Frizzell particularly excelled on mid-tempo numbers and ballads that left plenty of room for improvisation, but he could deliver up-tempo novelty numbers with equal effectiveness. By adapting a soft singing style to the honky tonk sound, he became the consummate singer to two generations of young performers from George Jones and Merle Haggard to George Strait and Randy Travis. Frizzell revolutionized honky tonk singing, and in the process helped it acquire more widespread acceptance and popularity.³⁴

The son of an itinerant oil field worker, William Orville Frizzell (1928-1975) grew up in a succession of oil boomtowns in the Southwest. As a youngster, he listened to the Grand Ole Opry and, if radio waves permitted, the Texas Playboys on KVOO, Tulsa. Like so many other youngsters in the area, Jimmie Rodgers soon became his idol, and he decided quite early in life that he wanted to follow in the singing brakeman's footsteps: "I knew when I was twelve years old what I was gonna

³⁴ Merle Haggard quoted in Robert Hilburn, "Hail to the Real King," Los Angeles Times 9 May 1993.

do. I was gonna sing. Jimmie Rodgers, absolutely, just his voice, the guitar, and the yodel shaped my part in life.” Shortly after his self-revelation, Frizzell began appearing on radio, playing Jimmie Rodgers and oft-requested Ernest Tubb tunes, and performing at dances. In the mid-forties, he entered the honky tonk circuit, playing a number of Southwest clubs before returning to Texas in 1948. After a brief stint in the oil fields, he made an unsuccessful attempt at acquiring a spot on the Louisiana Hayride. Despite the disappointment, Frizzell persevered, fine-tuning his singing style and adopting honky tonk instrumentation. In early 1950, he traveled to Dallas for a pre-arranged meeting with Jim Beck, who recorded a Frizzell demo of a song called “If You’ve Got the Money, I’ve Got the Time” that drew the attention of Don Law. Signing with Columbia in June, Frizzell’s re-recorded version of the demo sold half a million copies in the span of two months. In December, he made his first Opry appearance, and in early 1951 commenced a year of tremendously successful touring, including a brief pairing with Hank Williams. In 1951, Lefty Frizzell truly reigned as country music’s king, spending nearly half the year at the number one position on the Billboard charts with three different singles. Frizzell’s whirlwind of success continued on into 1952 before coming to an abrupt halt mid-year when he and his manager (Jack Starnes) parted ways. Near the end of the year, he quit the Opry and relocated to California, where he became a popular performer on Los Angeles’ Town Hall Party. Like so many other honky tonk singers, Frizzell’s career suffered during the heyday of rock and roll, but he managed to rebuild his career in the sixties and early seventies before succumbing to a heart attack in 1975. With their accolades and

tributes, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard revitalized Frizzell's forgotten legacy soon thereafter, leading to his posthumous induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1982.³⁵

Lefty Frizzell established his musical and vocal style at the outset of his recording career, in July 1950, when he recorded "If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time" and "I Love You Mostly," among others. The tinkling piano of Madge Sutte placed Frizzell's sound in the honky tonk vein, with the musical effect duplicated by succeeding pianists. Vocally, Frizzell introduced his innovative vocal approach, most noticeably on "I Love You a Thousand Ways," a plaintive ballad that demonstrated his gifted songwriting abilities as well. The playful "Shine Shave Shower" and the subsequent "Give Me More, More, More (of Your Kisses)" and "I'm an Old, Old Man (Tryin' to Live While I Can)," meanwhile, revealed Frizzell's humorous side. Nearly one-third of Frizzell's repertoire before 1955 consisted of happy love songs, most of them ballads. On slower tunes, Frizzell uses his voice to the greatest effect, particularly on "I Want to Be With You Always" and "Forever (and Always)." As a songwriter, he proved equally adept at sentimental pieces and songs about failed relationships. "Look What Thoughts Will Do" is a fine example of how he blends clever phrasing with vocal flexibility. Like Tommy Duncan, Frizzell built upon his affection for Jimmie Rodgers' singing style, adapting it to his voice to make it his own. Two Rodgers covers, "Travellin' Blues" and "My Rough and Rowdy

³⁵ Wolfe, Lefty Frizzell, 4-92; Cooper, Lefty Frizzell, 18-129; Lefty Frizzell quoted in Wolfe, Lefty Frizzell, 5; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 231-232; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 151-152.

Ways," illustrate the point. As the fifties progressed, Frizzell augmented his honky tonk piano/old time fiddle/steel guitar sound with harmonica, drums, and mandolin, with mixed results. With Frizzell's compelling vocal presence, such musical embellishments detracted a bit from the intimacy of his performances. Through it all, however, Frizzell's voice shone through, weaving its way around the musical backdrop straight to the audience. Up to and including his last recordings (in the seventies), Lefty Frizzell never lost the ability to entrance listeners with his vocal ambience.

Hank Locklin represents another Southwestern performer whose distinctive vocal style became the centerpiece of his recordings. The native of McLellan, Florida began his radio career in Pensacola, around the age of twenty. During the war, he moved to Mobile and began touring with a group (as lead guitarist) on the Alabama-Florida Coast. In the fall of 1946, the band relocated to Shreveport, where Locklin stepped up as one of the group's vocalists. Within two years, he and his band (The Rocky Mountain Boys) were in Houston, on radio and playing in the city's thriving dancehalls. While in Houston, the group made its first recordings for the local Gold Star label. Soon thereafter, the band broke up, and Locklin moved to Dallas, where he teamed with Bill Callahan for a tour of north Texas. Locklin's recording career did not begin in earnest until he returned to Houston in 1949 and signed with the Four-Star label. On the strength of several regional hits, he began to attract the attention of Nashville executives and the Grand Ole Opry, which he appeared on in late 1953. He continued to reside in Houston in the mid-fifties, however, commuting to Dallas for

his regular performances on KRLD's Big D Jamboree before finally joining the Opry in 1960.³⁶

Locklin's legacy to country music revolves around his mellifluous vocal style and his aptitude at writing heartfelt ballads. Before he began recording in Nashville near the start of 1952, he used a variety of Houston session musicians for instrumental backing on his Gold Star and Four Star releases. These deft musicians generally provided sparse instrumentation to Locklin's commanding tenor. After a number of tentative vocal performances on his first recordings, Locklin began singing with more assertiveness on "The Same Sweet Girl," a lovely ballad from 1949 that also debuted his penchant for writing effective ballads that celebrated marital fidelity. "The Same Sweet Girl" and another self-penned love song entitled "Send Me the Pillow You Dream On" established Locklin as a popular regional performer in the Southwest. He went on to record a number of other similarly constructed songs, including the poignant "Our Love Will Show the Way" and the sanguine "The Place and the Time." Locklin possessed a pleasant voice, full-bodied but not piercing, with just enough country twang to appeal to honky tonk crowds. When Locklin stretches his singing powers to the limit, as he does on "No One is Sweeter Than You" and "Let Me Be the One," he also pulls listeners in with his vocal adventurousness. Locklin was the ultimate honky tonk crooner, with an exuberant, pop-tinged vocal style that convincingly translated the dreamy imagery of his lyrics without appearing saccharine.

³⁶ Coffey, Hank Locklin, 2-25.

It comes as no surprise that he survived the rock and roll massacre and emerged as a popular mainstream country singer in the 1960s.³⁷

Of all honky tonk singers of the postwar period, none possessed a more robust voice than Webb Pierce. Regardless of subject matter, Pierce brazenly sang full force in an effort to fill the clamorous nightspots with his powerful voice. Musically and vocally, he unabashedly embraced the unvarnished roots of honky tonk at a time when the sub-genre was beginning to soften its rough edges. Lyrically, he masterfully mixed brutal honesty with portraits of his characters' vulnerability to capture the nature of postwar concerns about fidelity and trust. The combination of his sturdy voice, musical approach, and lyrical forthrightness ensured his broad popularity among country music listeners and contributed greatly to honky tonk's domination of the charts in the early 1950s.

As a youngster growing up in Monroe, Louisiana, Webb Pierce (1921-1990) developed an interest in playing country music from listening to Jimmie Rodgers records and watching Gene Autry films. As a teenager, he started performing on local radio before joining the army in World War II. After his discharge, he and his wife traveled to Shreveport in 1944, where they began performing together on Hal Burns' Hillbilly Hit Parade. For several years, Pierce maintained a day job and remained a part-time performer, but his prospects improved when he signed with Four-Star Records in 1949. The following year, he secured a spot on the popular Louisiana

³⁷ Coffey, Hank Locklin, 24-25; Kevin Coffey, et al. "Hank Locklin: Gold Star, Royalty, Four Star, and Decca Discography," in Coffey, Hank Locklin, 28-31; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 235.

Hayride, offering him much-needed exposure. In 1951, he signed with Decca and by the end of the summer had his first number one hit with "Wondering." In late 1952, he moved to Nashville and joined the Grand Ole Opry. Currying the favor of disc jockeys and juke box operators and making himself accessible to fans, Pierce emerged as the most successful honky tonk performer after Hank Williams' death, spending twenty weeks at the number one position in 1953 and producing four of the top ten country singles of 1954 (a feat heretofore surpassed only by Eddy Arnold in 1948). Rockabilly and his estranged relationship with the Opry tempered his success in the mid-late fifties, yet he continued to produce a number of top ten singles well into the 1960s.³⁸

Pierce's first recordings for Four Star reveal an artist in search of a distinctive sound. Backed primarily by just a steel guitar and his own rhythm acoustic, Pierce offers a couple of sturdy vocal performances on "New Panhandle Rag" and "Georgia Rag," and dapples in crooning on "I've Loved You Forever It Seems." On several numbers recorded for the Pacemaker label in 1950 and early 1951, Pierce builds upon his initial sound by adding a heavier beat (provided by an upright bass and sock electric guitar), most noticeably on "In the Jailhouse Now." He also begins to reveal

³⁸ Ronnie F. Pugh, liner notes, Webb Pierce: King of the Honky-Tonk from the Original Decca Masters, 1952-1959, Country Music Foundation CD CMF-019D/MSD-35500, 1994; Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night": A History of Louisiana Country Music, diss., Tulane University, 1995 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 447-450; Nat Green, "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 57, No. 34 (25 August 1945): 75; "1954's Top Country and Western Records...according to Retail Sales," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 52 (25 December 1954): 1; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 244-245; Otto Kitsinger, Webb Pierce: The Wandering Boy, 1951-1958 (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1990) 2-8.

his vocal assuredness on "The Last Waltz" when he takes his tenor into the high register. The Webb Pierce sound fully coalesced when he switched to Decca, with his voice ringing out above a band that augmented the Pacemaker sound with a fiddler, pianist and drummer. "Drifting Texas Sand" established the precedent of Pierce altering old songs to fit the honky tonk mold, more often than not with successful results. His version of an old Cajun tune, "Wondering," established his presence on the country music scene, with twelve other number ones following in the 1950s. A searing fiddle (over time played in unison with the electric lead guitar), tinkling piano, and innovative steel guitar work squarely placed Pierce's songs in the honky tonk mode, as did his piercing vocals. On "Slowly," Bud Isaac's revolutionary use of pedal steel guitar (which altered the pitch of the instrument and produced innovative chords) set a new industry standard in the mid-fifties.³⁹

Lyrically, Pierce concentrated on failed relationships, with his sad stories often set to up-tempo musical background (i.e. "It's Been So Long," "You Can't Be True," and "Even Tho"). Many of his songs broached the dicey subject matter of adulterous relationships and failed marriages. In "I Haven't Got the Heart," Pierce spins the tale of a husband entrapped in a loveless marriage; in "That Heart Belongs to Me," he pleads with his wife to ignore rumors of his infidelity and resigns himself to fighting for her. "Don't Throw Your Life Away" explores a couple's struggle to overcome a woman's past indiscretions, with the man trying to convince her to look more towards

³⁹ Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 244-245; Rich Kienzle, "Steel," Country Music Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 1976): 61; John Haggard, "Bud Isaacs," Guitar Player Vol. 10, No. 11 (November 1976): 31.

the future. In one of country music's most unique love songs, "Back Street Affair," a man married to an adulterous wife finds love with another woman, but has to struggle with the shame he has brought upon her in deceiving her about his marital status. Such unspeakable subject matter undoubtedly raised the eyebrows of many listeners, but did not deter Pierce, who explains the criteria of his song selection and force behind his strident singing style:

It's the sincerity of the song, but yet you must perform it right by putting your heart and soul into it...It tells a story about life, the way it is. I always tried to sing about something that all people have done, but never talked about, but when they heard the song, that became an emotional outlet. They would think, 'that is my life.'

This philosophy led Pierce to the center of controversy when he released "There Stands the Glass" (1953), a song about finding solace in alcohol. Some radio stations banned it; nevertheless, it reached number one. Pierce did not hesitate in his decision to record it: "Both Jim Denny of the Grand Ole Opry and Fred Rose said recording it would ruin my career because it tolerated drinking. I went ahead and put it out anyway, and (it became) one of my most requested songs." Pierce's daring attracted fans and helped him survive the rock and roll onslaught. Unlike many other singers, he resisted full embracement of newer sounds: "I just never would want to be a rock and roll singer. I don't have the heart for it. My heart is with country music." No one could ever confuse Webb Pierce with a rock singer; his voice was pure country and the lyrical subject matter he chose evidenced his appreciation of country music listeners'

concerns. Disconcerting to some, Pierce's vocal and music style endeared him to the honky tonk audience that continually pushed him to the top of the charts.⁴⁰

As the distinctions between the honky tonk realists and Southwest vocalists indicates, different schools within the sub-genre approached their music in various ways, emphasizing vocals, lyrics or a distinct musical ambiance. One common factor united nearly all of them: a deep appreciation of Jimmie Rodgers. Lefty Frizzell fondly recalls listening to the Singing Brakeman in his youth: "I loved his voice and I'd yodel and harmonize with him and it gave me peace. I can truly say he was the biggest influence on my life." Webb Pierce enjoyed listening to his mother's Jimmie Rodgers' records as a youth, with "In the Jailhouse Now" being his particular favorite. While many viewed Pierce's 1954 version of the song as sacrilege, Pierce himself probably intended it as a salutary gesture. Ernest Tubb remembers Hank Williams as a Rodgers' fan as well. No honky tonk performer publicly esteemed Rodgers more than Tubb himself, frequently reminding the country music industry and audience of the singer's legacy. In the notes accompanying an album reissue of Rodgers' recordings, Tubb wrote:

The great contributions this man made to what we now refer to as country and western music has directly or indirectly affected more performers in this field

⁴⁰ Webb Pierce quoted in Mindy Tate, "Hall of Fame Award is Ultimate to Pierce," Brentwood Journal 19 September 1990; Webb Pierce quoted in Kitsinger, Webb Pierce, 19; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 232-233; Webb Pierce quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 419.

than anyone I can think of. Jimmie Rodgers had more impact than any other single individual, past or present.

Despite his legion of fans and lingering spirit, Rodgers was on his way to becoming a faint memory by World War II, with RCA-Victor's listing only one of his records in its 1941 catalog. A reissue of his records later in the decade produced only moderate sales. With Rodgers largely forgotten by the early fifties, the honky tonkers and several other country music artists moved to revitalize the late singer's legend.⁴¹

Sometime around 1951, Ernest Tubb raised the idea of a Jimmie Rodgers Memorial to another Rodgers admirer, Hank Snow. Working with city officials and the chamber of commerce of Meridian, Mississippi (Rodgers' birthplace), Snow and Tubb arranged a day-long celebration marking the twentieth anniversary of Rodgers' death. Shortly after the festival began, Justin Tubb and Jimmie Rodgers Snow (sons of the event's organizers) unveiled a white marble statue of the "Singing Brakeman," with short speeches made by such notable guests as Jimmie Davis, Governor Frank Clement (of Tennessee) and Rodgers' widow. In the evening, the celebration moved to a local junior college stadium, where at least 20,000 gathered for what one reporter described as "the greatest assemblage of hillbilly talent ever seen in one show." The following list represents only a fraction of the performers who participated in what

⁴¹ Lefty Frizzell quoted in Geoff Lane, "The Last of Lefty Frizzell," Country Music Vol. 4, No. 2 (November 1975): 42; Kitsinger, Webb Pierce, 19; Nick Tosches, "Honky Tonkin': Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, and the Bartender's Muse," Country: The Music and the Musicians, 244; Ernest Tubb quoted in Hank Snow, The Hank Snow Story (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 351-352; Nolan Porterfield, Jimmie Rodgers: The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979) 361-362.

Hank Snow described as “one big giant jam session”: Roy Acuff, Hank Snow, Little Jimmy Dickens, Carl Smith, Webb Pierce, Bill Monroe, the Carter Family, Minnie Pearl, Charlie Monroe, Billy Walker, Jim Reeves, Tommy Duncan, Jimmie Davis, Slim Willet, and the Texas Troubadours. In hindsight, the Jimmie Rodgers celebration stands as one of the most significant moments in country music’s history. In addition to representing Rodgers’ redemption and symbolizing country music’s collective spirit, it validated the genre’s presence in southern society by demonstrating its respectability and reverence for tradition. On May 26, 1953, “hillbilly” music became “country” music in the eyes of its beholders.⁴²

The effort to change the name of the music predominantly produced by white rural southerners actually began early in the postwar period, when its nationalization stimulated the movement to replace “hillbilly” with a less depreciative term. Some performers found it offensive, others simply viewed it as a contradiction of business principles, as Ted Daffan explains: “As a result of (the hillbilly) label, many people who would have liked the music would not buy it.” Floyd Tillman makes a similar observation: “When it was ‘hillbilly,’ there would be people who’d look around to see if anybody was watching before they bought a hillbilly record.” Ernest Tubb loathed the term, cautioning those who used it: “Smile when you call me a hillbilly.” Hank Williams and other preferred the term “folk” music, a label affixed to the genre in the

⁴² Snow, The Hank Snow Story, 352-357; “Jimmie Rodgers: Hillbilly World to Honor His Memory,” The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 20 (16 May 1953): 1, 16; Bert Braun, “Jimmie Rodgers Day: Folk Artists and Execs Stage Great Tribute,” The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 23 (6 June 1953): 1, 17, 44.

early forties by the trade papers. Fred Rose, Williams' producer and manager, wrote an impassioned letter to Billboard in 1946 that vehemently defended "folklore" and chided its detractors: "We call it 'hillbilly' music, and sometimes we're ashamed to call it music. I think, if we took the time to check up on it, we would find that all the wrong and bad is in our conception of 'folklore,' not in 'folklore' itself." While Rose attacked the pejorative term from one angle, Ernest Tubb approached it from another, pointing out the folly of it to industry executives: "('Hillbilly') had kind of a mocking tone to it...So I started telling the record companies, 'Don't let's call it 'hillbilly,' let's call it something else.' So I thought, 'why not 'country,' since we all come from the country?'" After awhile, the name stuck." Eventually, Tubb and Decca's Dave Kapp agreed on the more elastic "country and western" tag which encompassed some of the more pop-orientated based acts, with Billboard adopting the phrase to its jukebox charts in June of 1949.⁴³

Ernest Tubb contributed to country music's respectability in other ways as well. In 1947, he led a troupe of Grand Ole Opry performers in a successful appearance at New York's Carnegie Hall. While the entourage's appearance was not the first of its kind at the prestigious theatre, its success ensured that it would certainly

⁴³ Ted Daffan, interview with Garna Christian, Houston, 24 October 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Floyd Tillman quoted in Marty Racine, "Tillman Takes His Talent on Stage," Houston Chronicle 18 October 1984; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 46; Ernest Tubb quoted in Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 132; Fred Rose quoted in "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 31 (3 August 1946): 123; Ernest Tubb quoted in Marshall Fallwell, "E T Remembers: On His Last Night at the Ryman, Ernest Tubb Talks About the Old Days," Country Music Vol. 2, No. 8 (April 1974): 77; Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 133; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 8.

not be the last. A Billboard reviewer commented that the show's \$12,000 gross revealed three things: country music's drawing power, the loyalty of its audience, and its increasing profitability. In 1952, the opening of the Hayloft, an all-country night club in the heart of downtown Chicago, further illustrated country music's appeal in northern cities. The opening of Ernest Tubb's Record Shop in Nashville in 1947 established the precedent of country performers becoming record retailers in large urban areas. Soon thereafter, similar stores appeared in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Dallas, Hollywood, Wheeling, Knoxville, New York and Louisville, further making country music listeners' presence felt.⁴⁴

In the South, politicians fell in line with country music's growing presence and popularity. In early 1953, Mississippi Representative William Arthur Winstead sponsored a bill three months before the dedication of the Jimmie Rodgers Memorial to designate the date "National Hillbilly Music Day." The following year he extended an open invitation to members of Congress to attend the second annual Jimmie Rodgers celebration. Unfortunately for country music fans and Rodgers' devotees, Adlai Stevenson took Winstead up on his offer, delivering a forty-five minute political speech that rained on the spirit of an already drizzly day. Another southern politician, Howard H. Baker of Tennessee, called on Congress to issue a joint resolution

⁴⁴ Pugh, Ernest Tubb, 48-50, 135; "Hillbilly Bash in Carnegie Perks Stem Interest," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 38 (27 September 1947): 1, 21; "Hillbilly Nitery Makes Bow in Chicago July 1," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 17 (26 April 1952): 17; Lee Zhito, "Merchandising Pays Off. Stone Does Well By Folk, Both on Disks and in Store," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 48 (26 November 1949): 17; Bill Simon, "Merchandising Pays Off: Hillbilly Center (54th Street, NY) Not in Hills, But All is Rosie," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 53 (31 December 1949): 14.

declaring June 30-July 5, 1954 "National Hillbilly Homecoming Week," with festivities patterned on a regional country celebration in Maryville, Tennessee to take place all over the nation. Politicians realized that sponsorships and appearances at such country music gatherings not only garnered them votes, but also pumped money into local economies.⁴⁵

By 1954, country music was a seventy million dollar a year business, with most earnings (\$40 million) coming from personal appearances predominantly east of the Mississippi. Big name artists like Roy Acuff earned from \$1500 to over \$2000 for concert appearances, while other major acts like Webb Pierce and Hank Snow brought in between \$1,000 to \$1,500 for their services. As the country music audience expanded and the industry burgeoned, the nature of the personal appearance changed dramatically after the war. Promoters who booked country music acts at folk music parks in the early forties expanded their efforts to others venues such as stadiums, drive-ins, and minor league baseball parks (when home teams were out of town) as well as indoor municipal auditoriums. On Sundays, country music artists played the folk music parks (usually for a flat performance fee), while during the week they concentrated on the other locales, either for cash or a percentage of the proceeds. Folk park owners charged sixty cents to a dollar for admission and spent around \$2,000 for

⁴⁵ "Hillbillies May Get Their Day," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 8 (21 February 1953): 1, 29; "Congress to Go Hillbilly? Invite House Members to Meridian Festival," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (22 May 1954): 41; Joe Martin, "Politicians Descend on Meridian Fete," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 23 (5 June 1954): 14, 26; "Hillbilly Week: Hoppers Bill in Congress for National Fete," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 20 (15 May 1954): 16.

performers. The Sunday shows ran all day and into the night (normally from one p.m. to midnight), with featured acts performing three half-hour segments. Because the touring season ran from Easter through October, it was not unusual for popular performers to make upwards of \$20,000 from the Sunday shows alone. In the early fifties, many of these acts continued to book themselves (particularly at smaller billings), but professional promoters, radio station artists' service bureaus, record companies and even disc jockeys generally placed artists in larger venues. Promoters like Oscar Davis, Connie Gay, and Tom Parker scheduled their individual acts at indoor stadiums and municipal auditoriums for shows that ran approximately two hours and opened with local acts. In between, time was set aside for the selling of songbooks and commemorative items. Parker helped RCA-Victor organize its "Country Caravan," an entourage that included Eddy Arnold, Johnnie and Jack, Charline Arthur, and Chet Atkins that played ten cities in a fifteen day period. Fans could obtain tickets for the shows at retail record shops, with a reduced price offered if they purchased an RCA-Victor recording by a country artist. Promoters often organized these group bookings ("package shows") on their own as well. Oscar Davis, for instance, promoted the Carnegie Hall concert in 1947. In the summer of 1951, 43,000 people jammed the Cotton Bowl in Dallas for a one-night show featuring Bill Monroe, Minnie Pearl, and a group of popular regional performers. An Ernest Tubb/Hank Williams/Minnie Pearl conglomeration at the Kansas City Auditorium grossed \$17,000. In towns of over 100,000 people, where television use soared, promoters found it necessary to increase the number of big names in the package

shows, from two to four, in order to draw people out of their homes. Country music promotion in the post-war period revolutionized the country music industry, accounting for well over half of its profits and helping transform it into big business.⁴⁶

Under these conditions, performers without connections to promoters and large stations fell by the wayside. As Bill Bolick recalls, this put considerable pressure on pre-war acts like the Blue Sky Boys to fall in line with contemporary trends, or perish:

Most groups had booking agents or managers, and were combining groups of at least three or four different acts for one date. We had seldom played with other acts or used more than three people. We were constantly harassed to use more modern material in our songs...most recording directors did not understand or appreciate old-time music. They simply let true, authentic folk music wither on the stalk.

Many traditionally orientated acts continued to work on regionally popular barn dances (like the Renfro Valley show) that discouraged the star system and instrumental modernization. They retained core listeners and continued to draw

⁴⁶ Joe Martin, "Country Music Full of Green Stuff—Folding Kind, That Is," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (22 May 1954): 1, 30; Paul Ackerman, "Country & Western Fans Like Their Talent Alive: Personal Appearances in the Field Nudge \$50,000,000 Per Year," The Billboard Vol. 67, No. 23 (21 May 1955): 1, 15, 48; Neil V. Rosenberg, Bluegrass: A History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) 95-96; Johnny Sippel, "New Horizons for Country Western Platter Spinners," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 9 (28 February 1953): 58; Johnny Sippel, "Dixie Successes Spur Rustic Headlines to Seek More Dates," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 51 (22 December 1951): 44-45; "RCA 'Country Caravan': Artist Tour to Hit 10 Big Cities in 15 Days," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 3 (16 January 1954): 1; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 100-101; "Personal Appearances Boom Along the Suburban Trails: Rural Stars Thrive as City Acts Strive," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 38 (19 September 1953): 1, 15.

crowds to their tours, but their economic grosses paled in comparison to acts booked by big-name promoters and agencies. Large-wattage stations like WLW (Cincinnati) and WLS (Chicago) maintained promotional divisions to set up barn dance performers' tours, but were considerably less aggressive in their efforts than the WSM Artists' Service Bureau, and hence lost many of their most popular performers to the Grand Ole Opry. Longtime WLS performer Bob Atcher describes the situation:

WSM was doing a tremendous job of keeping just the cream of their old talent and constantly turning over and looking for new faces, new names... Then, on top of that, the star system was always practiced on the Grand Ole Opry, as against the family type thing (on WLS).

Atcher and several other performers left the National Barn Dance after the war, leaving only a handful of big-name draws. The program's inability to retain network affiliation after the war and the failure of a television version of the show symbolized WLS' fall from competitive status.⁴⁷

While the National Barn Dance attempted move to television signaled changing times, radio's popularity continued to soar on a national level in the late

⁴⁷ Bill Bolick, I Always Liked the Type of Music That I Play: An Autobiography of the Blue Sky Boys, Presenting the Blue Sky Boys, John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly LP 104, 1977; Old Joe Clark, interview with John W. Rumble, Berea, 5 December 1985, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 47; Bob and Maggie Atcher, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 2 May 1987, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; George Biggar, "The WLS National Barn Dance Story: The Early Years," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 7, No. 23 (Autumn 1971): 111; Jonny Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose: The Life and Career of Rose Maddox (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1997) 138; "Barn Dance Back on Net, Hypes WLS," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 6 (5 February 1949): 6.

1940s, with nearly ninety-five percent of all American homes reporting at least one receivers in 1950. In the South, the number jumped from sixty-two percent in 1940 to ninety-one percent in 1950. An increase in the number of stations (doubling between 1945 and 1950) accompanied the rise in radio sets. Of the approximately two thousand stations broadcasting in 1950, 650 featured country music shows. While television penetrated into larger markets, persons in rural areas continued to depend on radio for entertainment well into the 1950s. As a result, several of the regional barn dances that appeared in the 1930s and early 1940s continued to thrive in the late forties alongside several others that debuted in the post-war period, like the Big D Jamboree (KRLD, Dallas) in 1945, the Old Dominion Barn Dance (WRVA, Richmond) in 1946, the Hometown Jamboree (KXLA, Los Angeles) in 1947, the Virginia Barn Dance (WDVA, Danville) in 1949, and the Saturday Night Shindig (WFAA, Dallas) in 1952. Most maintained an affiliation with national networks, but only one, the Louisiana Hayride, came to rival the Grand Ole Opry in stature.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Housing—General Characteristics (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1943) Table 10; United States. Bureau of the Census. A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States: 1950. Housing—General Characteristics (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1952) Table 20; "Facts on Country & Western Radio Jamborees," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 49 (5 December 1953): 88-89; Paul Lazarsfeld and Harry Field, The People Look At Radio (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946) 101; Wayne W. Daniel, Pickin' on Peachtree: A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990) 173; Edward Morris, "New, Improved, Homogenized: Country Radio Since 1950," Country: The Music and the Musicians, 89, 96-97; Ronnie F. Pugh, "Country Across the Country," Country: The Music and the Musicians, 171.

W. K. Henderson's Shreveport station broadcast country music as early as 1925. In the mid-thirties, it launched a weekly country variety show that featured the Shelton Brothers that continued on as The Saturday Night Round-Up in the early 1940s. Discontinued during the war, the show re-emerged as the Louisiana Hayride in the postwar period. Essentially the collective brainchild of KWKH's Henry Clay, Horace Logan, Dean Upson, and the Bailes Brothers, the Hayride premiered in early April 1948 as a three hour program broadcast from the 3,800-seat capacity Municipal Auditorium. Attracting such up-and-coming performers as Hank Williams, Webb Pierce, Johnnie and Jack, and others, the show gained notoriety as "the Cradle of the Stars." As the appellation suggests, most performers left the program after gaining enough popularity (usually through a hit record) to transfer to the Grand Ole Opry.⁴⁹

Louisiana Hayride performers left the show to join the Grand Ole Opry because the latter offered three things that the former did not: network affiliation, star status, and an aggressive promotion/booking agency. After its network hook-up in 1939, the Grand Ole Opry soon became a nationally popular show. By August 1947, it ranked seventh in popularity among all shows which featured some type of music. By 1949, the program was providing WSM with two-thirds of its advertising revenue.

⁴⁹ Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Folk and Regional Popular Music Traditions on Records and the Radio: An Historical Overview with Suggestions for Further Research," Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State, ed. Nicholas R. Spitzer (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Folklife Program, 1985) 224; Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night", 402-415, 439; Kyle Bailes, interview with Ronnie F. Pugh, Nashville, 19 July 1980, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 207.

Not surprisingly, both station owners and the show's network sponsor (R. J. Reynolds) developed a keen interest in the program after the war. According to David Cobb, a popular announcer at WSM since the mid-thirties, R.J. Reynolds and the Esty Agency in New York had an enormous impact on station policy, even influencing the decision to hire Red Foley as a replacement for Roy Acuff in 1946: "I think the Opry was just a bit too country for the agency people up in New York...Red Foley, his style was not typical Opry style. He was...from the Chicago scene, and his songs...came closer to the pop ballad thing." Accordingly, when Acuff returned to WSM in 1947, Foley retained his position as host of the network portion of the program. Jimmy Wakely tellingly terms Foley "the big changer of the Grand Ole Opry"; his hiring not only brought an aura of sophistication to the show but demonstrated the station management's resolve to build a stalwart cast of barn dance all-stars.⁵⁰

Ironically, Roy Acuff deserves the credit for turning the Grand Ole Opry into a star-centered program in the first place. Before his ascension, the show (like so many other barn dances) frowned upon individual showmanship that detracted from its folk/amateurish feel. Acuff's success undoubtedly opened the minds of the show's sponsors and hastened the program's emphatic shift towards star-stalking during and after the war. When Acuff stepped down in early 1946, Opry management took the

⁵⁰ "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 31 (2 August 1947): 114; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 105; David Cobb, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 18 August 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Elizabeth Schlappi, Roy Acuff, the Smoky Mountain Boy (Gretna: Pelican Pub. Co., 1978) 53; Jimmy Wakely, interview with Douglas B. Green, Burbank, 25 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

opportunity to utilize Foley's broad appeal to reach an even larger audience. When the Louisiana Hayride appeared, it adopted a different format from the Opry's, with less emphasis on featured acts and more on presenting a multitude of performers. The Hayride merged time constraints on their acts with a large roster of singers in an effort to breed a competitive atmosphere, thus forestalling complacency and keeping the program fresh. In this, they underestimated the powerful attraction of star-status and hence lost popular performers who recognized the financial opportunities that the Opry offered.⁵¹

Broadcast with 50,000 watts, the Louisiana Hayride certainly provided plenty of national exposure and even some star status, but in the late 1940s, the name of the game was personal appearance revenues. Country music tours grossed substantial profits, with the key to success centering on promotion. KWKH did not maintain a structured booking agency, and hence failed to systematically promote the appearances of Hayride performers. WSM, on the other hand, consistently demonstrated its commitment to this pursuit, beginning in 1934 with Harry Stone's establishment of the Artists' Service Bureau and continuing on in the late 1940s and early 1950s under the principal direction of James R. (Jim) Denny, who increased Grand Ole Opry tour billings fifty percent within four years after assuming the position of bureau manager. Denny helped organize package shows, booked Opry members into large-capacity venues, and set up a system of civic and business contacts to ensure Opry members (and the bureau) a steady flow of income. A 1953

⁵¹ Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 205; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 77.

list of performers promoted by the Bureau reads like a who's who of country performers, including, among others, Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, Ernest Tubb, Hank Snow, George Morgan, Carl Smith, Moon Mullican, Ray Price, Webb Pierce, George Jones and Red Foley. Artists on Grand Ole Opry tours in 1954 accounted for more than one-half of all country music records sold that year. Not surprisingly, many young performers in the late forties and early fifties, like Charlie Louvin, viewed establishment in Nashville as the key to their success: "We felt that Nashville was where it was at. If you weren't in Nashville, you were just almost next to being out of the business." With its promotional tentacles, network exposure, and status, the Grand Ole Opry attracted acts that otherwise would have balked at the nominal salary they received for performing on the program. Likewise, Opry members waived potentially lucrative Saturday night booking to retain their affiliation with the show. As Ernest Tubb points out, "You had to be back in Nashville every Saturday night, come hell or high water, for the Opry." With shrewd business sense, Jim Denny and WSM management helped institutionalize the Grand Ole Opry and in the process contributed to the establishment of Nashville as the hub of country music.⁵²

⁵² Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night", 422-423; Joe Martin, "Country Music Full of Green Stuff—Folding Kind, That Is," 30; Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography, 110; Johnny Sippel, "Dixie Successes Spur Rustic Headlines to Seek More Dates," 44; WSM Artists' Service Bureau, advertisement, The Billboard 11 April 1953: 91; Charlie Louvin, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 30 November 1977, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Ernest Tubb quoted in Fallwell, "E T Remembers: On His Last Night at the Rhyman, Ernest Tubb Talks About the Old Days," 72.

Country music's emergence as big business together with its move toward respectability and acceptance inevitably led to an effort to sanitize the honky tonk sound. On jukeboxes across the South, honky tonk reigned in the early fifties, as Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, and Kitty Wells continued to rack up hits alongside the somewhat less serrated Southwestern vocalists. In the late forties and early fifties, the honky tonk sub-genre grew steadily in popularity, eventually dethroning country-pop from its wartime and postwar dominance. Concurrently, country music expanded ever further beyond its pre-war working-class, rural, southern base. Many younger country music listeners and newcomers to the genre found honky tonk's stark lyrical realism and nasal, shrilling singing styles unbecoming even as they readily accepted its blend of old-time fiddling and scathing steel guitar. As a result, primal honky tonk (Ernest Tubb, Floyd Tillman, Kitty Wells and Hank Williams) and transitional honky tonk (Lefty Frizzell, Webb Pierce, Ray Price and Hank Locklin) enjoyed popularity side by side with a more toned-down approach to the sub-genre. Soft honky tonk emerged in the early 1950s as an alternative to the sound born in the taverns of the South. Members of this group sang with less emotional intensity and delved less frequently into issues of infidelity and internal suffering. Not surprisingly, this more sophisticated approach to honky tonk took shape in Nashville, a city ever-increasingly populated by industry movers and shakers with a pulse on country music's commercial possibilities and designs on its cosmopolitan future. In Carl Smith and Faron Young, country music found two talented candidates for this new honky tonk style.

Carl Smith (b. 1927) grew up in Union County, Tennessee, north of Knoxville. As a youngster, he enjoyed listening to Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, and Ernest Tubb on the Grand Ole Opry. After learning to play the guitar, he began performing at several informal local events before journeying to Knoxville to start on radio in 1944. After a stint with the United States Navy, he returned to east Tennessee in 1946 to begin his career in earnest. Over the next three years, he worked at several radio stations in the region, performing on daily shows and scheduling personal appearances. Eventually, he returned to Knoxville radio, where a demo he recorded for a fellow bandmember attracted the attention of Troy Martin, who brought up the young singer's name to Columbia's Don Law and the Opry's Jack Stapp. After some initial misgivings, Stapp agreed to give Smith a spot on the Grand Ole Opry and soon thereafter, Law signed the young singer to a contract in the spring of 1950. Under the tutelage of Ernest Tubb and others, Smith's recording career and radio popularity soon blossomed, with his first top ten hit ("Let's Live a Little") and first number one song ("Let Old Mother Nature Have its Way") both coming in 1951. Between mid-1951 and late 1954, he scored twenty top-ten hits en route to becoming one of the most popular country music performers of the early 1950s.⁵³

Carl Smith combined strong, confident vocals with sparse instrumentation to create an exuberant honky tonk sound that defied the sub-genre's rueful roots. Between 1950 and 1955, he did not use a fiddler on his recordings, opting instead to

⁵³ Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music: A 36 Hour Radio Documentary, 368-369; Wolfe, Carl Smith, 2-12; Ronnie F. Pugh, Carl Smith, Columbia LP FC 38906, 1984.

emphasize steel guitar and lead guitar parts to complement the emotions of a lyric. As time wore on, he added drums to create a heavier beat that added even more spirit to his up-tempo repertoire. Many of his mid-fifties pieces bore more than a passing resemblance to rockabilly, but Smith never became a rocker. He possessed neither the demeanor nor the inclination to do so. The secret of Smith's success lay in the restrained passion he and his band brought to their recordings, always teetering on exultation but never letting loose like a rockabilly performer. Somewhere between a crooner's glibness and a blues singer's swagger, Smith epitomized just the right mixture of confidence and self-composure to carry his predominantly light-hearted repertoire to the brink of honky tonk's parameters without overstepping its bounds. As the "Gentleman Honky Tonker," Carl Smith respected the honky tonk tradition even as he worked to modernize the sub-genre.

Smith's first recordings (from 1950) reveal the characteristics of his early fifties output. "Guilty Conscience" indicates the primacy of his vocals, "Washin' My Dreams in Tears" demonstrates his preference for up-tempo material, and "I Betcha My Heart I Love You" sets the optimistic tone of his song selection. Over forty-five percent of the songs he recorded before 1955 center around fulfilled love and light-hearted lyrical material. Songs like "(When You Feel Like You're In Love) "Don't Just Stand There" and "It's A Lovely, Lovely World" brim with positivism, while "Trademark" and "Just Wait Till I Get You Alone" flow along with an assurance that defies honky tonk's melancholy nature. Smith generally avoids such scabrous subject

matter as first-person infidelity; when he does (as in “This Orchid Means Goodbye”), he ends up breaking off the relationship and returning to his wife. While other honky tonkers invite their sweethearts out to the working class dancehalls and taverns, Smith dresses in a suit and tie to take his wife out dancing (i.e. “Let’s Live a Little”). Smith excels at up-beat pieces like “Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way,” but he could also sing laments (“If Teardrops Were Pennies” and “Are You Teasing Me?”) with equal cogency. The addition of steel guitarist Johnny Sibert lead guitarist Sammy Pruett, and drummer Farris Coursey lends considerable punch to lively songs like “Back Up Buddy” and “Go Boy Go.” The musical character of the latter number illustrates a point Smith makes about his group’s mid-fifties approach:

It was between rock ‘n’ roll and western swing, really. We knew what we were doin’. I done all things during that period. I used to do ‘Shake, Rattle, and Roll’ on the stage and songs like that before Elvis started really clickin’.

The audiences got a kick out of it—It was pretty rockin’.

Grand Ole Opry management did not object to Sibert’s dobro-like electric steel guitar playing but, as Smith, recalls, his use of drums proved more controversial: “Ernest (Tubb) told me I’d go broke, and Acuff wanted to get me fired off the Opry. It caused a lot of confusion, and I never did get em’ on the Opry.” Smith eventually left the program in 1956 to join Red Foley’s Ozark Jubilee. He continued to perform regularly on a variety of shows before retiring to his ranch in 1977. Unjustly overlooked by many country music historians, Carl Smith deserves

recognition for his innovations to the honky tonk genre and his foresight into country music's future.⁵⁴

Like Carl Smith, Faron Young (1932-1996) brought a great deal of lyrical positivism to honky tonk, but as some of Smith's songs heralded rock, many of Young's records served as precursors to the pop flavorings of the Nashville Sound. The Shreveport native's first musical influences were Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra, and when he started singing in public as a teenager, he sang popular numbers like "The Object of My Affection" and "Stay as Sweet as You Are." As Young recalls, however, he soon developed an interest in country music after seeing and hearing Hank Williams: "Well somebody took me to the Louisiana Hayride one night to see Hank. And I saw him encore nine times. And I said, well, he gets a little more applause than these pop songs I've been singing and I just got to listening to it and one thing led to another. After attending college for a year, Young decided to pursue a career in country music and, around early 1951, began appearing with Webb Pierce on Shreveport radio. Pierce helped Young obtain his first recording contract and secured him a spot on the Louisiana Hayride. His performances on KWKH brought him to the attention of Capitol's Ken Nelson, who signed the young singer to Capitol in early 1952. Young made his first appearances on the Grand Ole Opry in mid-1952 and soon relocated to Nashville. A month after recording two songs destined for the Billboard

⁵⁴ Otto Kitsinger and Richard Weize, "Carl Smith: The Columbia Discography, 1950-1959," in Wolfe, Carl Smith, 30-34; Wolfe, Carl Smith, 16, 28; Carl Smith quoted in Rich Kienzle, "Carl Smith: You Can't Roll Back Time," Country Music, No. 113 (May-June 1985): 38; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 228.

top ten, Young was drafted into the Army, in November 1952. His singing and musical talent landed him on a stateside radio recruiting program (Town and Country Time) that gave him considerable exposure during his two years in the service. The Army also allowed him to make occasional Opry appearances and to record. After leaving the Army, he returned to Nashville and the Grand Ole Opry, enjoying a prosperous two years before rock and roll began taking its toll on the honky tonker's career. Young made the transition well to country-pop and the Nashville Sound, however, and went on to become quite successful in the sixties and early seventies, scoring twenty three top ten hits in the period.⁵⁵

Young's first recordings (released on Gotham) show him searching for a style and sound. Combining pop-tinged vocals and Southwestern instrumentation, "Just Imagination" and an early version of "Have I Waited Too Long?" indicate Young's vocal strengths and point to the musical direction that he took after signing with Capitol. Both "Tattle Tale Tears" and "Have I Waited Too Long?" (from his first Capitol session), focus on Young's considerable vocal prowess, showcasing his ability to swoon like a crooner while still retaining a country edge in his singing. "I Knew You When" (from May 1952) demonstrates Young's pop background, almost sounding like a country Bing Crosby. In "Going Steady" and "I Can't Wait (For the

⁵⁵ Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night," 452-454; Faron Young quoted in Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary, 400; Daniel Cooper, liner notes, Faron Young: Live Fast, Love Hard, Die Young, Original Capitol Recordings, 1952-1962, Country Music Foundation CD CMF-020D/S21-18678, 1995; Colin Escott, Faron Young: The Classic Years, 1952-1962 (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 2-38; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 372-374.

Sun to Go Down),” Young begins singing like Hank Williams and moves to more forthright honky tonk instrumentation. Both songs are positive love songs about courtship, and both reached the top ten. Lyrically, Young soon found his niche in songs of this type, with a voice perfectly suited for the optimism in “Just Married” and “That’s What I’d Do For You.” Gradually, Young stepped out of the Hank Williams’ shadow to create a unique blend of honky tonk instrumentation and full-bodied, distinctively pop-tinged singing. With outstanding interpretations of two Tommy Collins songs (“If That’s the Fashion” and “If You Ain’t Lovin’, You Ain’t Livin’”), Young begins singing with an engrossing assuredness. Over the next two years, he demonstrated his vocal confidence in successfully recording everything from honky tonk struts (i.e. “Live Fast, Love Hard, Die Young”) to country-pop ballads (i.e. “Sweet Dreams). His rendition of “In the Chapel in the Moonlight” (from mid-1954) serves as a precursor to the Nashville Sound and reveals why his transition to the new country music style proved so smooth. Possessing one of honky tonk’s most versatile voices, Faron Young helped keep the sub-genre alive by choosing and writing songs that appealed to both younger listeners as well as the established audience.⁵⁶

The confident optimism evident in the recordings of Faron Young and Carl Smith represents a shift in the lyrical focus and vocal styles of honky tonk performers. In the early postwar period, the hard-edged approach of the honky tonk realists dominated the sub-genre before the transitional southwestern vocalists emerged in the

⁵⁶ Otto Kitsinger, Don Roy, and Richard Weize, “The Capitol Discography,” in Escott, Faron Young, 40.

early 1950s with their moderate alternative. Smith and Young took the process one step further, lyrically moving further away from the bleakness of the realists and musically adopting more up-tempo rhythms and pop stylings. While the entire sub-genre represented the blurring of intragenial distinctions, the soft honky tonk style indicated the merger of country and American popular music.

The cross-pollination of the two musical genres had roots in World War II, when Americans discovered the music of the Texas triumvirate and when country began adopting pop music instrumentation. After the war, American popular music endured an identity crisis precipitated by the demise of the big bands and the archaic nature of Tin Pan Alley triteness in the atomic age. Between 1947 and 1949, the burgeoning record industry suddenly took a downturn, with sales falling seventeen percent in 1948 and another eight percent in 1949. New York songwriters could still write catchy tunes, but as historian Lawrence Levine points out, they seemed incapable of grasping the postwar mood:

In a period when divorce rates were rising, family stability declining, pastoral lifestyles disappearing, bureaucratic impersonality and organization increasing, popular music constructed a universe in which adolescent innocence and naivete became a permanent state.

While the idyllic vision of pop music proved incongruous with contemporary realities, the realism of the honky tonkers seemed to capture the postwar situation perfectly. In contrast to Tin Pan Alley tunesmiths who resided in New York, honky tonk artists lived in the trenches and were more attune to the impact of socio-cultural

developments and the tribulations of modern life. As Ted Daffan explains, country music in general seemed more authentic and accessible to American listeners and hence began to draw their attention:

Pop music was very flowery and sentimental. And a lot of the words and phrases were not natural, were more poetic than natural everyday talk. And country writers, me included, would tell it in straight, simple language, like it was. And this appealed to a great number of people because it sounded much more real.

Just as country performers in the early forties appealed to Americans' sense of patriotism and wartime sentimentalities, the lyrics of the honky tonkers spoke to their postwar concerns.⁵⁷

In their search for a way to reverse the downward spiral of record sales in the late forties, executives in the pop music industry soon discovered the appeal of country music lyrics. Knowing that the American public would balk at the harsh instrumentation of the honky tonkers, they opted to have popular singers record versions of country songs. Several country music songwriters (i.e. Floyd Tillman) had their songs reach the pop charts in revamped version in the late 1940s, but Hank Williams emerged as the pop industry's favorite source of alternative material. The deluge began in 1951, when Tony Bennett reluctantly recorded "Cold Cold Heart" at the behest of Columbia Record's Mitch Miller. After the success of several other

⁵⁷ Richard A. Peterson, Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 187-189; Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness, 273; Ted Daffan interview.

Hank Williams covers, Billboard reported in August of 1952 that “pop a and r men will be anxiously awaiting the release of...new Williams’ disks.” As the polisher of many of Hank Williams’ songs, producer/publisher Fred Rose deserves a great deal of credit for this development as well. While country music did not exactly save the pop music industry, it did give it a much needed boost in the late forties and early fifties, with honky tonk songwriters leading the way.⁵⁸

While honky tonk injected a dose of realism into popular music, it made a considerable impact on country music’s postwar development as well. Like the postwar traditionalists, the honky tonkers reasserted country music’s southern identity at a time when nationalization downplayed it. With sawing fiddles, weeping steel guitar, and plaintive singing, honky tonk merged southwestern instrumentation with southeastern vocal styles to create a sound for the country music audience’s new urban environment. Lyrically, honky tonk in its early years stressed angst and alienation to become the sound of southern working-class misfits struggling to adjust to the radical lifestyle changes in a new socio-cultural environment. While the postwar traditionalists emphasized fortitude through religious and traditional values, early honky tonkers indirectly suggested that listeners find strength in the recognition of their collective plight. With honky tonk songs crossing over to the pop charts and

⁵⁸ Williams, Hank Williams, 27; Escott, Hank Williams: The Original Singles Collection...Plus, 11; “Golden Oatunes: Hank Williams Clefs 22 Hillbilly Toppers,” The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 43 (27 October 1951): 15; “Bouncin’ the Pop Bayou: ‘Jambalaya’ Man Makes It Again on Big-Time Charts,” The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 35 (30 August 1952): 20; Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven, 240; John W. Rumble, Fred Rose and the Development of the Nashville Music Industry, 1942-1954, diss., Vanderbilt University, 1980, (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983) 298.

country music gaining legitimacy as both a musical genre and a prosperous business, however, industry executives began to view the rough-hewn sounds of the honky tonk realists as obsolete. The emergence of the southwestern vocalists and soft honky tonk of Carl Smith and Faron Young rectified the situation by offering a more positive outlook with a less abrasive sound. As a result of these developments, honky tonk became less discernible as a sub-genre, a process accelerated by widespread adaptation of honky tonk instrumentation throughout the genre.

As its early fifties heyday indicates, honky tonk (in its new, modified form) dominated country music in the period preceding the rock explosion. When the youth movement struck, honky tonk, as the music of the urban hillbilly, suddenly became expendable. Honky tonk performers' cowboy attire turned into an eyesore while their instrumentation seemed antiquated. Floyd Tillman terms 1955-1960 the "Hillbilly Depression" because of the disappearance of steel guitars and fiddles from country music during the period. Badly wounded by the onset of the rockabilly, honky tonk reemerged in the sixties as the Bakersfield Sound, in the seventies as the Outlaw movement, and in the eighties as the music of the New Traditionalists. What began as a lyrical expression of working class alienation eventually became a musical vehicle for middle-class contentment half a century later. Largely forgotten today, honky tonk's pioneers established a sound in the forties and early fifties that provided the musical framework for modern country. Their impact on country music before 1955 was considerable as well, with steel guitars and fiddles becoming the norm throughout the genre during the postwar decade. With the country music audience expanding and

many honky tonk listeners moving into the middle-class, however, several performers modified the sound, much as Faron Young and Carl Smith did. While Young and Smith stayed within the parameters of honky tonk in their styles and instrumentation, others began adding elements of pop and blues music into the musical matrix. The development of the country-pop and country-blues sub-genres represents the last two directions country music would take in the era of its postwar modernization. One set the stage for the rockabilly movement, while the other served as a precursor to the Nashville Sound.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Floyd Tillman, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 13 October 1986, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Bruce Feiler, "Has Country Music Become a Soundtrack for White Flight?," New York Times 20 October 1996; Kirby, Rural Worlds Lost, 305.

CHAPTER 6—THE SOPHISTICATION OF COUNTRY MUSIC: THE RISE OF COUNTRY-POP IN THE POSTWAR DECADE

When country music burst on the American scene in the late thirties and early forties, it began a transformation in style and character that brought it more in congruence with both urban and national culture. Expanding from an audience composed primarily of white, working-class rural southerners to one made up of a cross-section of regional and demographic groups, country music emerged in the decade after World War II as a genre with genuine national appeal. Many of the southern songwriters and performers who continued to dominate country music after its wartime nationalization directed their efforts at the genre's core audience even after they gained national exposure. The post-war traditionalists and early honky-tonk artists in particular strove to produce songs and sounds that appealed to southern working-class listeners in rural and urban settings, respectively. With southern society undergoing a radical transformation as a result of the war, country music selections generated by performers within these two sub-genres often dealt with contemporary misgivings about the socio-cultural effects of modernization. The honky-tonkers' ingenuous portraits of failed relationships and social vicissitudes attracted the attention of other Americans as well, who generally preferred to hear popular entertainers sing them in a more polished style. As time went on and country music became big business, the genre began experimenting with other ways to cross the hillbilly barrier, to reach American audiences directly. As participants in an alternative movement, the post-war traditionalists demonstrated little interest in the dilution of

country music's rural southernness, preferring to build upon the musical foundation laid by the pre-war progressives with lyrical respect to the southern vernacular. The honky tonk realists adapted urban instrumentation but retained a plaintiveness in both their singing style and lyrical world-view. The southwestern vocalists mollified the realists' lyrical discontent somewhat, but it was not until the development of the soft honky-tonk sound that the sub-genre began to fuse with American popular music. By that time, many members of the honky tonk audience were entering the middle-class, finding the contentment that seemed elusive in the immediate postwar period.

Concurrent with these developments, two groups of performers emerged in the postwar decade, resolved to liberate country music from its rural, southern past in a more decisive fashion. Country-blues artists took the energy and eclectic instrumentation of western swing and merged it with African American blues to create an intoxicating blend of country music that appealed to urbanites and younger listeners seeking a more aggressive sound with less conservative lyrics. Country-pop performers directed their mix of euphonic vocals and conventional lyrical imagery at the urban bourgeoisie and listeners seeking a more esthetically pleasing strain of country music. Members of both groups similarly sought to distance themselves from the genre's hillbilly trappings but ran in distinct directions, one toward American popular music, the other in the direction of urban blues. Country-pop represented country music's future (the Nashville Sound), while country blues soon transformed itself into the genre's nemesis (rockabilly). Country music executives increasingly based in Nashville endorsed country-pop

because it reconciled the genre's adult orientation with their efforts to expand its audience. In taming the honky-tonkers, isolating the post-war traditionalists, and distancing themselves from country-blues liberalism, the country music industry in Nashville overcame the hillbilly obstacle and eventually survived the onslaught of rock and roll. Country-pop became their primary weapon in the fight for country music's respectability and economic survival.

Three principal factors contributed to the rise of country-pop in the late forties and early fifties: the postwar urbanization/sophistication of the American South; the support of the Grand Ole Opry; and the sub-genre's affiliation with national musical trends. Between 1940 and 1950, the South underwent a dramatic demographic shift, with the population of southern urban areas increasing by approximately six million (+ 13.5 percent). Large metropolitan areas added 2,400,000 whites (+ 4.5 percent) while southern rural areas lost 1,100,000 (- 12.5 percent). In 1950, over fifty percent of the white South still resided in the countryside, but the days of the agrarian South were numbered. Many rural white southerners who traveled to southern cities for defense jobs in World War II remained in the region's production force. In 1955, sociologist Rupert Vance reported that of the 3,300,000 southern workers (black and white), only 12.7 percent remained employed in agriculture. Noting the increase of southerners in production and professional jobs, he went to conclude: "The dominant psychology of the South is no longer agrarian, it is Chamber of Commerce."

Comparing the southeast's population and total per-capita income growth in the period between 1939 and 1954 with national figures, Carl Abbott notes a below average

increase in the former and above average rise in the latter. Residents in both the southern countryside and southern urban areas began living with more amenities. In 1940, less than one-quarter of dwellings occupied by rural white southerners were equipped with indoor plumbing. In urban areas, nine of ten white southern homes reported working indoor plumbing in 1950. In 1940, one in six southern farms had electricity, five years later, one in three did. In large southern cities, residents already with electricity and indoor plumbing began spending more money on luxuries. In Nashville, the number of automobiles in the city rose from 39,000 in 1945 to 85,000 in 1952, while telephone ownership increased from 59,000 to 105,000 between 1945 and 1951. Many southerners remained rural in outlook and peculiarly southern in cultural attributes, even as they entered urban environments and moved up in economic status, but few longed to return to their pre-war existence. Rural migrants struggling with urban alienation and culture shock turned to honky tonk music for solace, while those who experienced a more pleasant transition viewed country-pop as a sophisticated alternative.¹

¹ United States. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Housing—General Characteristics. (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1943) Table 6; United States. Bureau of the Census. A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census: 1950. Housing—General Characteristics (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1952) Table 7; Rupert B. Vance, "The Urban Breakthrough in the South," Regionalism and the South: Selected Papers of Rupert Vance, eds. John Shelton Reed and Daniel J. Singal (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982) 177-182; Carl Abbott, The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities Revised edition. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987) 16; David R. Goldfield, Promised Land: The South Since 1945 (Arlington Heights, H. Davidson, Inc., 1987) 7; Robert G. Spinney, "World War II and Nashville, Tennessee, 1938-1951: Social Change and Public Sector Expansion," diss., Vanderbilt University,

If post-war prosperity furnished country-pop with an audience, the Grand Ole Opry provided a boost to it with increased exposure. When they hired the Vagabonds and Pee Wee King's groups in the mid-thirties, Harry and David Stone set the show's precedent for giving smoother sounding acts more air time. Old Joe Clark points out that when the Stone Brothers supplanted George Hay as the show's architects, they immediately moved to distance themselves from hillbilly stereotypes: "They were seein' the things that were oncoming and kindly helped steered it off." The R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (sponsor of the Grand Ole Opry's half-hour network segment) and their advertising agency in New York (William Esty Company) both encouraged the shift to programming that appealed to listeners beyond the rural, southern base. To this end, the Esty ad agency handpicked Red Foley to replace Roy Acuff as host of the network segment after the latter stepped down in early 1946 to do more touring. The Opry's financial supporters viewed Acuff's departure with ambivalence, well aware of the singer's national popularity while welcoming the opportunity to replace him with a more cosmopolitan figure. David Cobb explains the circumstances behind Foley's hiring: "I think the Opry was just a bit too country for the agency people in New York...Red Foley, his style was not typical Opry style, He was...from the Chicago scene and his songs like "Old Shep" and (others) came closer to the pop ballad type thing." Foley took over the network portion in April 1946 and retained the position as host even after Acuff returned. In addition to Foley, the

1995, 84; Charles P. Roland, The Improbable Era: The South Since World War II (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975): 183.

network portion offered a variety of entertainers who appealed to a cross-section of listeners. By August 1947, the Opry was the seventh most popular national radio show that featured music. In presenting a diverse array of folk talent, Grand Ole Opry management consciously directed their program toward a wider audience and in the process, welcome more sophisticated sounding acts.²

Country pop performers also benefited from developments in the music industry and, to a lesser extent, postwar societal trends that broadened their potential audience. Frank Sinatra's ascendance in World War II and the mid-forties' demise of the big bands ushered in a surge of vocalists on the American music scene that concentrated on song interpretation as a means of attracting listeners. Sinatra explains the new approach to singing and its appeal: "I get an audience involved because I'm involved myself...I cry out the loneliness...Sentimentality, after all, is an emotion common to all humanity." As a vocal-orientated sub-genre, country-pop latched on to this trend as well as profiting from the phenomenal rise of the recording industry that accompanied postwar prosperity. When listener-orientated music gain in popularity, country music became more accessible, a process begun in World War II.

² Old Joe Clark, interview with John W. Rumble, Berea, 3 December 1985, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; David Cobb, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 18 August 1983, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; "Roy Acuff: Getting' Away From the Mike," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 17 (27 April 1946) cover; "Foley Takes Over Reynold's Ole Opry As Acuff Travels," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 14 (6 April 1946): 5; John W. Rumble, liner notes, Red Foley, MCA CD MCAD-10084, 1991; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 31 (2 August 1947): 114; John W. Rumble, Fred Rose and the Development of the Nashville Music Industry, 1942-1954, diss., Vanderbilt University, 1980 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983) 293-295.

Commenting on the genre's continued nationalization after the war, Billboard columnist Johnny Sippel made the following observation in late 1949:

The promotion given country talent on records, in music publishing, television, radio, theatres, folk music parks, and motion pictures has brought this peculiarly American form of music and talent to the attention of a huge number of urban dwellers.

After gaining the attention of urbanites, country-pop performers developed a following by offering listeners light-hearted and sentimental pieces that affirmed traditional values and captured the post-war mood. While the honky tonk acts preferred candor and realism, country pop singers offered nostalgia and emotionalism. With the nationwide urbanization that accompanied the war boom, many Americans developed an interest in retro music, a phenomenon that manifest itself in a waltz and square dance craze late in the decade. Within country music, the waltz fad began with Bill Monroe's "Kentucky Waltz" in 1946 and reached its peak in the early 1950s with a tune called "The Tennessee Waltz" which, in various recording incarnations, sold nearly five million copies by mid-1951. Written by Pee Wee King and Redd Stewart, "The Tennessee Waltz" authenticated country music's national acceptance and firmly established the genre in the American musical vernacular.³

³ Hazel Meyer, The Gold In Tin Pan Alley (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958) 129; Frank Sinatra quoted in Ian Whitcomb, After the Ball (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1972) 203; Bill C. Malone, "Honky Tonk: The Music of the Southern Working Class," Folk Music and Modern Sound, eds. William R. Ferris and Mary L. Hart (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982) 122; Johnny Sippel, "Rustic Rhythm Reaps \$\$ Reward," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 43 (22 October 1949): 97; Roland, The Improbable Era, 166; John W. Rumble, Roy Acuff (Alexandria: Time-Life Records,

Appropriately, the creative force behind “The Tennessee Waltz” was a man who helped build up the respectability of both the Grand Ole Opry and country music in the late 1930s/early 1940s. Continuing a tradition begun by Vernon Dalhart and Jimmie Rodgers and carried on by Clayton McMichen and the Texas triumvirate, Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys helped bring country-pop to maturity. From the moment they stepped on the Grand Ole Opry stage with their odd assortment of instruments (by country standards) and western garb to the introduction of “The Tennessee Waltz” and several other mainstream hits, Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys was a band ahead of its time in both attitude and musical approach.⁴

Born in Abrams, Wisconsin in 1914, Pee Wee King (né Julius Frank Anthony Kuczynski) acquired an affection for playing music at a very young age, principally from his father, who played fiddle in an old time ethnic band. King first taught himself how to play harmonica, then, with his father’s encouragement, learned to play the fiddle/violin from formal lessons; soon thereafter, he joined his father’s band. Hearing his sister play piano and accordion, however, he decided to take a somewhat different course than his father’s: “The accordion fascinated me because I thought there was so much more music to it than to a single-string-stringed instrument.” In high school, he formed his own band and began performing at parties and other local

1983) 23; Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 211.

⁴ Nolan Porterfield, Jimmie Rodgers: The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979) 209; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 60-61.

events, eventually landing a radio job in Racine, Wisconsin playing polkas, waltzes, and other old-time ethnic music. Listening to the National Barn Dance, he soon incorporated elements of western music into his act: "There was Bradley Kincaid, we took a lot of his songs...and there was a group, Louise Massey and the Westerners...and we started patterning ourselves after them, because they had smooth singing, fine accordion music, and fine arrangements." While on a tour of the Midwest, Gene Autry and promoter J. L. Frank heard King's radio show, and asked the accordion player to join them on their tour. After the tour, King traveled with Autry to Louisville, broadcasting over 50,000 watt WHAS. Working with Autry, King learned more western material as well as acquainting himself with the ways of the music business. After Autry left for Hollywood (around 1935), King stayed in Louisville with a band called the Log Cabin Boys before leaving to form his first incarnation of the Golden West Cowboys. Moving to Nashville, Frank teamed King up with Roy Acuff for a series of successful personal appearances. Gaining a reputation as a professional, smooth-sounding band, the Golden West Cowboys drew the attention of David and Harry Stone, who invited them to join the Opry in 1937.⁵

From the outset, Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys was one of the Opry's most progressive bands. Along with Zeke Clements, they introduced western

⁵ Pee Wee King, "A Little Bit About Myself," rec. 1952, Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys, Bear Family CD 15727, 1994; Pee Wee King quoted in Alana Nash, "Pee Wee King: He Changed the Course of Country Music," Country Music Vol.3, No. 11 (August 1975): 55; Pee Wee King quoted in Otto Kitsinger, Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 2; Kitsinger, *ibid.*, 2-7.

attire and songs to the show's audience; in time, they would also become one of the first Opry acts to play electric instruments (via James Clell Summey) and drums (via Harold "Sticks" MacDonald). Additionally, they brought with them a professional mindset and business savvy, as Pee Wee King recalls: "I was used to playing vaudeville theatres, and (other Opry acts) were playing schoolhouses—this was something new to me, we would never play schoolhouses, no---play theatres." Over the years, many notable vocalists worked with the group, including Eddy Arnold, Cowboy Copas, and Redd Stewart. After several successful years with the Grand Ole Opry (on stage and on tour), King and his band left the show in 1947 to return to Louisville, where he began a daily radio show while maintaining a weekly local television program. By the early 1950s, he had weekly television shows in Chicago, Cleveland, and Cincinnati as well. Following the popularity of "The Tennessee Waltz," the Golden West Cowboys became a fixture in the country top ten in the early 1950s. The rock and roll phenomenon took its toll on their success, however, with King eventually disbanding the group in 1959.⁶

Despite their popularity on the Opry and on the road, Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys did not appear on record until after the war. Following two tentative recordings released on the Bullet label in 1946, King's group signed with

⁶ Charles K. Wolfe, Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982) 92-95; Pee Wee King quoted in Kitsinger, Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys, 9; Kitsinger, *ibid.*, 7-19; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 12 (20 March 1948): 106; "Pee Wee King: The Golden West Cowboy," Old Time Country Vol. 7, No. 3 (Summer 1981): 10-12; Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996) 176.

RCA. With eight musicians (including a drummer), the Golden West Cowboys more closely resembled a western swing band than a standard Opry act. Musically, the band offered tight arrangements and generally up-tempo songs on their early pressings. "Steel Guitar Rag" and "I Hear You Knockin'" allow plenty of room for the band to showcase their talents, while "Keep Those Cold Icy Fingers Off of Me" and "Ten Gallon Boogie" hint at King's penchant for novelty material. Their cover version of "Kentucky Waltz," however, represented the future of the group. The band remained in western swing mode until December 1947, when they recorded "The Tennessee Waltz." With twin fiddles, Parisian accordion playing by King and a smooth vocal by Redd Stewart, "Tennessee Waltz" clicked with country music's more sophisticated listeners and, in the hands of Patti Page, went to number one on the pop charts in 1950. Publisher Wesley Rose commented on the song's significance: "It had the effect of breaking down all the barriers...It was a case of the people just couldn't kid themselves about country music anymore." The success of the song encouraged King to record a number of waltzes in the late forties, many virtual clones of the original. Adding a pianist to the group on "When They Played that Old Missouri Waltz" in 1949, King began moving ever closer to a pop sound.⁷

Vocalist Redd Stewart emerged as the most valuable member of the band in the early fifties. With a crooning singing style reminiscent of Bing Crosby, Stewart

⁷ Otto Kitsinger and Richard Weize, "Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys: The 1946-1958 Discography," in Kitsinger, Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys, 56-63; Wesley Rose quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 328-329.

masterfully handles the vocals on both mid-tempo pieces (“Tennessee Tears,” “River Road Two-Step”) and ballads (“If and When,” “Changing Partners”). Stewart’s vocals bore little if any resemblance to other country singers, emphasizing a tremolo effect and exhibiting no twang whatsoever. “Within My Heart,” from 1950, represents an unabashed attempt at pop, with Stewart showing off his considerable range in an arrangement devoid of country instrumentation. A duet vocal of Gene and Redd Stewart on “No One But You” represented another of the group’s high points. King also experimented with other pop vocal approaches, including trio leads (“What, Where, When”) as well as female background singing reminiscent of the Andrews Sisters (“Railroad Boogie”).⁸

As a country artist interested in incorporating pop elements into his repertoire in an effort to reach a wider audience, Pee Wee King avoids rural imagery in his lyrics. Most of his repertoire revolved around light-hearted material, often escapist, sometimes humorous, and occasionally trite. With “Slow Poke,” he turned his penchant for novelty material into a huge country seller and a pop crossover smash. “Silver and Gold,” with its hand-clapping and percussive effects, provided him with another number one hit. Two other hits (“Changing Partners” and “Backward, Turn Backward”) were clearly designed for an up-town crowd, and point towards country soft-sell in the late fifties. As early as 1944, Billboard labeled the Golden West Cowboys “one of the smoothest units of its kind”; ten years later, the trade paper

⁸ Kitsinger and Weize, “Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys: The 1946-1958 Discography,” 57-58.

commented: "King's music isn't the rootin', tootin', hell-raising kind of western stuff, (but rather) country music at its sweetest." From his early days on the Grand Ole Opry to his popular television broadcasts in the Midwest, Pee Wee King stressed modern arrangements and professional appearance and, in the process, helped carry country music over the hillbilly hump.⁹

While Pee Wee King helped lay the groundwork for country music's shift toward sophistication, Eddy Arnold accelerated the process with a manner and singing style that commanded the respect of the American public and the popular music industry. Major country music figures like Roy Acuff, Bob Wills, and Ernest Tubb all deserve considerable credit for bringing the genre closer to national acceptance, but in penetrating the urban and pop markets, Arnold directly introduced country music to more Americans than any other contemporary performer. In doing so, he revolutionized country music, opening it up to a middle-class audience and effectuating the Nashville Sound. Side-stepping the boisterousness of western swing and the stridence of honky tonk, Eddy Arnold became country music's leading ambassador in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Born in Chester County, Tennessee in 1918, Eddy Arnold grew up surrounded by music played in church and at local gatherings. He developed an interest in playing music at an early age, and by his mid-teens was performing regularly at picnics,

⁹ "1952's Top Popular Records, According to Retail Sales," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 52 (27 December 1952): 19; "Pee Wee King's Flying W Ranch (TV)," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 44 (30 October 1954): 13.

parties, dances, and church suppers. Although he liked to listen to Jimmie Rodgers and Carter Family records, he patterned his singing after Gene Autry and Bing Crosby, opting for a softer and smoother vocal approach. Arnold made his radio debut in 1934 (with a guest appearance on WTJS in Jackson), but did not pursue a career in the medium until early 1937, when he returned to the station and began appearing daily. A year later, he and a fellow musician names Howard "Speedy" McNatt journeyed to St. Louis, where they broadcast over a small station by day and played the honky tonks at night. Arnold soon grew tired of the honky tonks, however, and upon learning of the departure of the lead singer of Pee Wee King's band over WSM, wrote to the bandleader inquiring about the position. After hearing a recording by Arnold, King and J. L. Frank invited the young singer to Nashville to join the group in 1940. Over the next few years, Arnold accompanied the Golden West Cowboys on numerous bookings (including the Camel Caravan), all the while improving his vocal delivery and learning the ways of the music business. By early 1943, with a family to support, Arnold decided to pursue a solo career and approached WSM's Harry Stone about a spot on the station. In addition to an early morning show, Arnold also began appearing on the Opry, eventually securing a fifteen minute segment on a non-network portion of the Saturday night program. He soon put together a band for personal appearances, built around Ivan LeRoy "Little Roy" Wiggins' dobro-influenced steel guitar playing. Near the end of the war, he forged a relationship with a promoter (Tom Parker) and a record company (RCA-Victor) that soon set his career in

motion.¹⁰

After signing with RCA-Victor in late 1943, Arnold and his band made their first recordings a year later, after the AFM ban was lifted. At their first session, Arnold's group recorded two sentimental pieces ("Mother's Prayer" and "Mommy, Please Stay Home With Me") that owed a great deal to pre-war country music. Commenting on the old-time feel of the recordings, Billboard noted that there was "nothing light-hearted in either side to make for jukebox favor." Perhaps taking note of reviews and unimpressive record sales, Arnold (and producer Steve Sholes) picked up the tempo after the war, with "I Couldn't Believe It Was True" incorporating more lively fiddling. The band's sound and Arnold's increasingly confident vocals really began to gel in early 1947, when they recorded several up-beat and up-tempo numbers. With its emphasis on Wiggins' effervescent steel guitar playing and Arnold's buoyant vocal, "That's How Much I Love You" provided the band with a signature sound. When Arnold reaches down to sing "baby," he reveals his affection for Bing Crosby's vocal approach, yet he retains just enough plaintiveness to distinguish his singing as rooted in southern folk music. The title of "Just a Little More Lovin'" hints at the lyrical subject matter of most Eddy Arnold songs of the period, while "(In the) Hills of Tomorrow" exhibits the optimism that became his trademark. Several songs from 1947 and 1948 brim with an infectious positive feel, with "Easy Rockin' Chair," "There's Not a Thing I Wouldn't Do for You," and

¹⁰ Michael Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, Pioneer of the Nashville Sound (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997) 7-60; Michael Streissguth, Eddy Arnold: The Tennessee Plowboy and His Guitar (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1998) 2-15.

“Anytime” all offering affirmations of life and love backed by breezy musical arrangements. While Arnold’s full repertoire balanced between light-hearted songs, tales of failed relationships, and sentimental numbers, his biggest hits in the postwar period either centered on cheerful lyrical material or presented tales of failed love with a lively beat. These types of arrangements appealed to the urban middle-class as lyrical expressions of postwar contentment and pleasing musical pieces. Lyrically, Arnold also displayed a social conservatism that attracted southerners across the board. “The Nearest Thing to Heaven” and “Little Angel with the Dirty Face” represent celebrations of parenthood, while “Momma and Daddy Broke My Heart” and “Don’t Rob Another Man’s Castle” examine the consequences of divorce and infidelity. Additionally, Arnold recorded several religious and sentimental numbers that never made the charts but endeared him to thousands of traditional listeners. He also proved capable of converting songs from other sub-genres and traditional material into the country-pop mold. On a remarkable cover of Will Hays’ “Molly Darling,” Arnold transforms the old folk standard into a modern country classic, highlighted by his subtle tremolo and Little Roy Wiggins’ effective playing. Arnold virtually reigned over the country charts in the late forties with his blend of musical idioms that appealed to a variety of listeners. In 1948, he reached his apogee, holding onto the number one slot for over forty weeks and recording five of the years’ ten biggest hits. Even after the rise of honky tonk, Arnold remained a fixture on the Billboard weekly

charts.¹¹

With a fully-matured self-assurance, Arnold began to venture further into country-pop in the late forties, with “The Echo of Your Footsteps,” “This is the Thanks I Get (For Loving You),” and “I’m Throwing Rice (at the Girl I Love)” indicating the softer tone to come. On all three numbers, Benjamin “Buck” Lambert’s fiddle is barely audible. Increasingly, Arnold’s recordings took on a more sophisticated approach, adding piano, background vocals, twin fiddles and other effects to create a more marketable sound. Seven crossover hits in 1948 helped spur this tendency; several other developments nurtured the trend. In October 1947, Arnold headlined two sold-out country shows at Washington’s austere Constitution Hall. Also around the time, Arnold had a regular slot on the Mutual Network, and, after leaving the Opry in 1948, became a featured act on CBS’ Hometown Reunion, another Saturday night network program. In March of 1950, Billboard named him the eleventh most popular male singer on the nation’s jukeboxes (Frank Sinatra came in tenth). Once recognized as a legitimate vocalist, Arnold began making guest appearances on several television shows with Bob Hope, Milton Berle, Perry Como and others, eventually obtaining his own video program in early 1955. In 1950, Billboard estimated his total record sales to that point at twelve million; five years

¹¹ “Folk Record Reviews,” The Billboard Vol. 57, No. 4 (27 January 1945): 64; Richard Weize, “Eddy Arnold: The Discography, 1944-1950,” in Streissguth, Eddy Arnold: The Tennessee Plowboy and His Guitar, 32, 35; Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, Pioneer of the Nashville Sound, 95; “Best Selling Country and Western Records—1946-1953,” The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (22 May 1954): 19; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 27-28.

later, their estimate rose to thirty million. With increased exposure via radio and television, acceptance by mainstream record buyers and huge turnouts at his concerts, Arnold naturally viewed a shift toward popular music as an opportunity to build upon his success and foster country music's respectability. Arnold comments on the reasoning behind his decision: "I never wanted to desert the country side, I just wanted to broaden my thing. I thought there was an audience out there that I could get if I just reached for them a little bit." On another occasion, he defended country-pop as a vehicle for helping shed country music of its regional provincialism: "It gives it recognition and exposure to the whole of the world that it never had before, and would not have had had this not come about." With twenty-nine top ten country singles (including thirteen number ones) charted by the end of 1949, Eddy Arnold began the fifties with a certitude that he could expand on the country-pop formula and reach a wider audience without losing the support of his customary supporters.¹²

Most of Eddy Arnold's recordings from the early 1950s maintain a country feel, principally through the retention of Roy Wiggins' steel guitar. With the addition

¹² Richard Weize, "Eddy Arnold: The Discography, 1944-1950," 35; Streissguth, Eddy Arnold: The Tennessee Plowboy and His Guitar, 2; Ronnie F. Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 137; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 59, No. 50 (13 December 1947): 102; Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, Pioneer of the Nashville Sound, 100, 121, 130; "Arnold and RCA Ink 7-Year Pact," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 51 (18 December 1948): 41; Charles K. Wolfe, Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977) 80; The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 34 (26 August 1950): cover; Frank M. Folsom, "30 Million Records Ago It Was Tough Plowing for Eddy," The Billboard Vol. 67, No. 3 (15 January 1955): 18; Eddy Arnold quoted in Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, 121; Eddy Arnold quoted in Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary, 504; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 27-28.

of Vic Willis on piano in 1950, however, Sholes and Arnold began a determined trek toward pop music. With twin vocals and tinkling piano, "Enclosed, One Broken Heart" represents a definite turning point; in 1952, Arnold began working more frequently with New York musicians, with "You Always Hurt the One I Love" and "Moonlight and Roses" coming very close to straight pop. Future Nashville Sound stalwart Hank Garland lends an element of jazz to several numbers from the period, complementing Arnold's vocal playfulness on "I'm Gonna Lock My Heart (and Throw Away the Key)" and "I've Been Thinking." On "Eddy's Song," a self-parody of the band's earlier approach, Wiggins returns to the forefront, but increasingly Sholes and Arnold chose to record without steel guitars or fiddles. On "I Really Don't Want to Know," Arnold delivers perhaps his finest vocal performance in a sparse arrangement of piano and acoustic guitars. In early 1955, he teamed with orchestra leader Hugo Winterhalter for a reworking of "The Cattle Call" that marked the beginning of the Nashville Sound brought to fruition later in the decade. Rock and roll halted Arnold's progress in the mid-fifties, but he returned triumphantly in the 1960s for another series of top ten hits. As country music's most respected figure in the late forties and early fifties, Eddy Arnold indurated its national acceptance and extended its appeal to urban, middle-class southerners. From his Stetson hat, starched white shirts, and dress slacks to his varnished vocal and brisk positivism, Eddy Arnold symbolized country music's move uptown. His success cleared the way for a multitude of country-pop vocalists who repudiated honky tonk's harshness and built

upon Arnold's stylistic fusion in an effort to further broaden country music's audience.¹³

After Eddy Arnold left the Opry in 1948, George Morgan emerged as his Nashville-based successor. While often compared to Arnold, Morgan developed a vocal approach closer to pop and a band sound more firmly rooted in country. While he did not reach Arnold's level of national success, Morgan remains a key figure in the development of country music's urban expansion, producing records that merged sentimental lyrics with a sophisticated, low-key sound.

Though born in central Tennessee, George Morgan (1924-1975) grew up in eastern Ohio, where his family moved in the late 1920s. The Morgans enjoyed listening to the Grand Ole Opry on Saturday nights, and George developed a liking for the smooth-sounding Vagabonds at an early age. As a teenager, he also developed an appreciation for Montana Slim (who became his idol) and the Blue Sky Boys. In the early-mid forties, he worked at a variety of jobs after receiving a medical discharge from the army, eventually putting the informal music instructions that his mother and father gave him to use when he began appearing with a band on WWST in Worster, around 1947. While the other members of the group gave up the idea of a career in music, Morgan stayed on the air, playing guitar and singing songs in a style patterned after Eddy Arnold. He eventually developed a following in the area and, on the strength of a composition called "Candy Kisses," moved to high-wattage WWVA in Wheeling. He soon returned to Ohio; before he left, however, he sent a demo of

¹³ Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, 134-147, 226-232.

“Candy Kisses” to Nashville. As Morgan recalls, Arnold’s departure from the Opry gave him the break he was looking for: “I wondered who would be replacing Eddy Arnold, and on Monday morning I got a call from WSM asking me to audition.” In late 1948, he began appearing on the Opry and soon secured a contract with Columbia Records. With Eddy Arnold ruling the charts, Columbia directed Morgan towards potential cross-over material, with mixed success. Morgan’s real strength lay in singing slow and mid-tempo ballads with a country flavor, and he scored several hits in the late forties and early fifties in this vein. While he left the Opry twice (in 1949 and 1956), he remained a fixture on the Nashville scene throughout his career as a staunch supporter of the country-pop blend he helped bring to perfection.¹⁴

At Morgan’s first session for Columbia (in January of 1949), he recorded “Candy Kisses” and three other chart-making songs with a group of studio musicians. Noticeably, Tommy Jackson’s barely audible fiddle sounds more like a violin, in keeping with the record company’s crossover plans for the singer. At his next session, Morgan recorded with steel guitarist Don Davis, who became a fixture in his band (“The Candy Kids”) and whose economical playing soon developed into the cornerstone of its sound. Davis usually played casual, conservative solos that adhered to melody and rarely displayed jazz flourishes. Bill Drake, Floyd Robinson and other

¹⁴ George Morgan, interview with Douglas B. Green, Nashville, 13 May 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Colin Escott, George Morgan: Candy Kisses (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 2-14, 20; George Morgan quoted in Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music, 268; Johnny Sippel, “Folk Talent and Tunes,” The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 27 (7 July 1951): 26.

lead guitarists similarly offered economical solos that complemented Morgan's easy-going style. With the addition of Marvin Hughes on piano/organ in 1950, the band adds its final crucial component in the development of its sophisticated country sound. Morgan delivers several outstanding vocal performances, particularly on "You Win the Bride," "Almost," "No One Knows it Better Than Me" and other mid-tempo pieces about failed relationships (over fifty percent of his lyrical repertoire). While Art Satherley and Don Law made several attempts at having Morgan record up-tempo numbers, his strength always remained in ballads and melancholy pieces. Novelty numbers like "Somebody Robbed My Beehive" and "You're a Little Doll" reflect the Arnold influence and demonstrate Morgan's suitability to more sentimental material. On numerous occasions, Columbia paired him with different female vocalists, including Rosemary Clooney and Dinah Shore, as well as adding group vocals to the mix. Many of these recordings point towards country music's future but failed to catch on at the time of their release. A song like "One-Woman Man" seems more appropriate in a country club setting than a honky tonk. Morgan weathered the storm of both honky tonk and rockabilly, however, and found a niche on the country music scene in the Nashville Sound era. While his contributions to country-pop are often overlooked, Morgan merits acknowledgment as a true pioneer in the sub-genre's development and one of country music's first cosmopolitan figures.¹⁵

¹⁵ Otto Kitsinger, Richard Weize, and Larry Zwisohn, "George Morgan: The Columbia Discography," in Escott, George Morgan, 40; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 216.

George Morgan, Eddy Arnold, and Pee Wee King all played key roles in polishing country music's image, meeting non-traditional listeners halfway in their acceptance of the genre. While honky tonk performers reached the American public with their songs, country-pop artists attracted them directly with their performances. The American public in general and urban listeners in particular unquestionably preferred the records of popular artists like Perry Como, Frankie Laine, and Nat King Cole over country offerings, but grew increasingly receptive to original country-pop records like "Slow Poke" and "Anytime." In the postwar era, American culture and the national music industry both drifted closer to homogenization, with regional distinctions obscured by the drift towards consensus and conformity. Country-pop artists reacted to this trend by adopting a smooth vocal approach and pleasant instrumental backing as a means to integrating into the mainstream of American popular music. Some, like Slim Whitman, actually began recording pop songs, a development that further obfuscated the line between white southern and national music. It did not take long for the country music industry to recognize country pop as their deliverance from the hillbilly quagmire and their key to financial success.¹⁶

Country pop's rise as the primary vehicle for expanding country music beyond its southern folk base correlated with the emergence of Nashville as the industry's hub

¹⁶ Immanuel Wallerstein, "What Can One Mean by Southern Culture?," The Evolution of Southern Culture, ed. Numan V. Bartley (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988) 11-12; Kurt Blaser, "'Pictures From Life's Other Side: Hank Williams, Country Music, and Popular Culture in America,'" South Atlantic Quarterly Vol. 84, No. 1 (Winter 1985): 14; "New Trends Evolve in Hillbilly Field," The Billboard Vol. 67, No. 7 (14 February 1953): 16, 44.

in the late forties and early fifties. The establishment of the WSM Artists' Service Bureau (in the mid-thirties) and the Acuff-Rose publishing house (during the war) helped provide the framework for Nashville's ascendance by setting up a financial infrastructure for country music writers and performers located in the city. As noted in Chapter Five, the Artists' Service Bureau contributed greatly to the Grand Ole Opry's barn dance preeminence after the war by offering Opry acts economic opportunities through its promotional activities. With an increasing number of country music's most prominent acts basing themselves in middle Tennessee, Nashville soon became a recording center as well. Early attempts at field recordings in Nashville produced mixed results, with the major labels in the 1930s preferring other southern cities like Atlanta, Dallas, and Charlotte, if they recorded in the South at all. This situation began to change late in the war, beginning in December 1944, when Eddy Arnold recorded his first selections in the WSM studio. Around this same period, three WSM engineers (Aaron Shelton, Carl Jenkins, and George Reynolds, Sr.) set up the Castle Recording Company, using the station's facilities to produce transcriptions and commercials as well as records. With Decca's Paul Cohen leading the way, executives at major labels began using the Castle facility (which relocated to the Tulane Hotel in 1947) to record their country artists. In 1952, Decca built its own studio in Nashville, with RCA-Victor announcing similar plans in 1954. Nashville still had some competition in the early 1950s as country music's recording center, but with every passing year it seemed to draw more musicians, writers, promoters, and industry executives into its orbit. Commenting on the migration to middle Tennessee,

Time magazine in 1951 termed Nashville "Tin Pan Valley." Around the same time, Opry announcer David Cobb coined its more permanent label, "Music City, U.S.A."¹⁷

The gradual concentration of the country music industry in Nashville had an enormous impact on the genre's stylistic development in the early 1950s. Principally, it accelerated its fusion with mainstream popular music that began during the war and furthered the dilution of sub-regional styles taking place in the late forties. While executives behind the scenes of the Grand Ole Opry encouraged more sophisticated sounds, producers in Nashville worked to create a more commercially viable product. To this end, they took a greater interest in the songs artists chose to record and encouraged the use of professional musicians on sessions. Decca's Paul Cohen, for instance, began using session musicians like Hank Garland, Ernie Newton, and Tommy Jackson with more frequency in the early 1950s. Versatile guitarists like Billy Byrd and Chet Atkins appeared on the recordings of artists affiliated with several different labels, further homogenizing the Nashville product. The end result of these developments were professionally produced recordings that adhered to music industry

¹⁷ Porterfield, Jimmie Rodgers, 159; Ronnie F. Pugh, "Country Across the Country," Country: The Music and the Musicians, eds. Paul Kingbury and Alan Axelrod (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) 153-161; Rumble, Fred Rose and the Development of the Nashville Music Industry, 193-195; John W. Rumble, "The Emergence of Nashville as a Recording Center: Logbooks From the Castle Studio, 1952-1953," Journal of Country Music Vol. 7, No. 3 (December 1978): 24, 28; Eddie Stubbs, "Johnnie and Jack, The Recordings," Johnnie and Jack and the Tennessee Mountain Boys (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992); Charles K. Wolfe, Kitty Wells: The Queen of Country Music (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1993) 7; "Tin Pan Valley," Time Vol. 58, No. 7 (13 August 1951): 61-62; John W. Rumble, "Grand Ole Opry," Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 1059-1060.

standards and appealed to a cross-section of listeners. While Nashville executives found it necessary to filter honky tonk, country-pop offered few complications. They recognized country-pop as the wave of the future and banked on its success. At the same time, they recognized that the base of the country music audience still consisted primarily of rural and transplanted southerners and wisely kept one foot in the genre's folk past. To this end, they supported acts like Little Jimmy Dickens, who offered several humorous observations on southern rural life in a modern instrumental setting. Dickens' willingness to mix rural humor with electric instrumentation brought him considerable success and helped legitimize novel sounds among traditionally-minded rural listeners. Tellingly, other Appalachian performers (i.e. those in the postwar traditional vein) who retained acoustic instrumentation and preferences for more serious subject matter faced a cooler reception in Nashville. In Hank Snow, however, the Grand Ole Opry and the country music industry found the key transitional figure in their quest to bridge the gap between past and present.¹⁸

Hank Snow represents country music's most undefinable figure. Were it not for his conspicuous use of the electric steel guitar, he would easily fit into the category of postwar traditionalism. If his nasal baritone was a bit more strident, he might deserve classification among the honky tonkers. At first glance, his blend of Jimmie Rodgers blues, rural imagery, and energetic rhythms seems out of time in an era when

¹⁸ Paul Fryer, "Local Styles and Country Music: An Introductory Essay," All That Glitters: Country Music in America, ed. George H. Lewis (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1993) 72; "Questions and Answers Reveal Approach, Policies of A & R Men," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 49 (5 December 1953): 54.

sentimental country-pop and realistic honky tonk reigned over the country scene.

Snow managed to rise above these obstacles, however, and reach listeners with his refurbishment of oldtime music. Of all the sub-genres, he comes closest to country-pop because of the listenability of his recordings and the widespread appeal of his approach. Snow defied the odds and found a niche on the Nashville scene; in the process, he led old time country music's last stand in the postwar era.

Clarence Eugene "Hank" Snow (b. 1914) grew up on the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, where he endured poverty and the physical abuse of his stepfather before leaving for sea at the age of twelve. Upon returning four years later, his supportive mother introduced him to the recordings of Vernon Dalhart and Jimmie Rodgers, the latter performer soon becoming Snow's idol. Taking up guitar, Snow began patterning his singing after Rodgers' style, and around the time he turned eighteen, successfully auditioned for a Halifax radio station. Through arduous practice and persistence, he gained a following through his broadcasts and his touring in the mid-thirties, eventually securing a spot on the Canadian Farm Hour, a coast-to-coast program. His first recordings for RCA-Victor in the mid-thirties (released only in Canada) demonstrated enough promise to keep him with the label while he perfected his skills on the Canadian theatre circuit. In 1944, Snow drove down to the United States and in early 1945 began appearing on WWVA in Wheeling. Over the next three years, he made several attempts to establish himself in the states, including three unsuccessful ventures to Hollywood. In 1948, his career took an upturn when he traveled to Dallas, where some of his Canadian releases were receiving airplay. Later

that year, he met fellow Jimmie Rodgers admirer Ernest Tubb, who convinced Opry management to give Snow a guest spot on the program. In the meantime, RCA-Victor began releasing Hank Snow selections in the states, with "Marriage Vow" becoming his first American hit. Snow recalls that Opry crowd responded coolly to his performances at first, until the release of a song entitled "I'm Movin' On":

"Audiences changed overnight. It was like magic. They were completely indifferent one week and the next week they were wildly enthusiastic." "I'm Movin' On" went on to become the number one country record of 1950 and led to numerous top ten singles over the next five years. While taken aback by the rock and roll surge, Snow retained his poise and returned to the charts in the 1960s with several other hits, all the while remaining ensconced on the Grand Ole Opry.¹⁹

Snow began his recording career as "The Yodeling Ranger," singing cowboy songs and Jimmie Rodgers-like pieces for RCA's Canadian division. Over the years, he incorporated several sentimental and story songs into his repertoire; after his voice deepened, he took on the title of "The Singing Ranger." His first post-war recordings released in the states ("Within This Broken Heart of Mine" and "My Two-Timin'")

¹⁹ Hank Snow, The Hank Snow Story (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 27-28, 83, 116-130, 190-240, 281-296, 323-324; Charles K. Wolfe, Hank Snow, The Singing Ranger: 1949-1953 (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1988) 1-4; Charles K. Wolfe, Hank Snow: The Yodeling Ranger: The Canadian Years, 1936-1947 (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1993) 2; Peter Guralnick, "Hank Snow, the Singing Ranger: Still Movin' On," Country Music Vol. 7, No. 2 (November-December 1978): 28-30; Marshall Fallwell, "Hank Snow Moves on in the Old Tradition," Country Music Vol. 2, No. 3 (November 1973): 69-70; Ruth Lee Miller, "Hank the Singing Ranger," The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder ns 4 (June 1945): 17; "Best Selling Country and Western Records—1946-1953," 19; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 299-300.

Mama”) show both the old-time and Jimmie Rodgers influences; instrumentally, these performances showcase Snow’s acoustic guitar backed simply by an electric guitar and bass. On his first recordings in the states (in March 1949), he retains the sparse accompaniment and sentimental approach, evident most clearly on “Nobody’s Child.” Vocally, Snow offers smooth and articulate singing, one of the trademarks of his recordings throughout his career. When he moved to Nashville in early 1950, Snow sought out a steel guitarist who could play in a simple, old-time way, eventually hiring Joe Talbot, a law student at Vanderbilt University. Talbot grew up in the Nashville area, where he listened to and attended the Grand Ole Opry regularly. As an adolescent, he modeled his Hawaiian guitar playing on Pete Kirby’s, learning riffs from Roy Acuff’s Dobro player while sitting in the front row of the Opry. After the war, the sound of Little Roy Wiggins’ steel guitar led him to purchase a lap-top guitar and amplifier. He soon began playing around the Nashville area in honky tonks, experimenting with different sounds and developing his own distinct style, one both old-timey in its Hawaiian and dobro basics and modern in its electrification. As Talbot explains, Snow was immediately attracted to the subtlety of his style:

He had just come to Nashville and he was having a little difficulty finding the type of steel guitar player he wanted because he preferred more the basic style and at that time everybody’d discovered eight strings and double-necks and all these things. They were gettin’ pretty fancy.

Snow also found a local fiddler named Tommy Vaden who played in the old-time,

bluesy manner that he sought.²⁰

At their first session for RCA-Victor, the group persuaded Steve Sholes to let them record "I'm Movin' On," an up-tempo number that mixed lyrical train imagery with enthusiastic instrumental backing. The success of the song led to several others in the same vein, most notably "Golden Rocket" and "One More Ride." On "The Wreck of the Old 97" (a childhood favorite of both Talbot's and Snow's), the group perfects its style, producing a remarkable cover version that effortlessly mixes oldtime country, smooth singing, and vigorous playing to create a sound both modern and reverent. Snow's deep respect for Jimmie Rodgers surfaces on several reworkings of the Blue Yodeler's songs that demonstrate where Snow's musical heart lies. They also reveal his prowess as a flat-picking acoustic guitarist, a talent that Snow uses to great effect on a variety of other song types as well, from novelty numbers like "Lady's Man" and "Music Makin' Mama from Memphis" to straight country-pop songs like "For Now and Always" and "I Don't Hurt Anymore." A guitar duet with Chet Atkins ("Silver Bell") reveals the exceptional skills of both players, one in the electric style, the other in the acoustic tradition. For his own part, Snow never used any type of pickup or amplifier when he played guitar, remaining steadfast in his appreciation of the hollow, acoustic sound: "On sessions I play my guitar in front of a microphone and onstage I do the same thing. Pickups clamp steel onto the wood of the guitar, which alters the guitar's original pure sound." Snow's solos on blues-tinged numbers like "Moanin'"

²⁰ Joe Talbot, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hendersonville, 3 May 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Wolfe, Hank Snow, The Singing Ranger, 3-5.

and "Confused with the Blues" offer proof of Snow's superior flatpicking abilities and illustrate yet another facet of his musical personality.²¹

Snow's exceptional guitar playing often overshadows his considerable vocal talent. Like his idol Jimmie Rodgers, Snow could sing everything from rounder blues to sentimental pieces with equal effectiveness. "Bluebird Island" demonstrates his harmonic ability, while "I Went to Your Wedding" and "Let Me Go Lover" reveal him as an adroit pop singer. On "A Fool Such as I," he delivers his finest vocal performance, an impressive fusion of country twang and pop vibrato that deservedly rose to the top of the charts. While it took his record company some time to realize it, Hank Snow offered many country music listeners in the early 1950s exactly what they wanted to hear: a simple, updated version of the old-time sound with just enough pop-flavorings to satisfy their gradually increasing sophisticated tastes. Just as urban listeners accepted Eddy Arnold's positive message, Pee Wee King's novelty numbers, and George Morgan's crooning, they embraced Hank Snow's musical amalgamation of past and present as the soundtrack of their own transition from southern folk to middle-class Americans. The Nashville country music industry viewed Snow and the other country-pop artists as godsend, performers modern enough to draw in new listeners and folksy enough to retain the traditional crowd.

When Red Foley came to Nashville in 1946, the Grand Ole Opry and country

²¹ Joe Talbot, interview with Douglas B. Green, Hendersonville, 3 May 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Richard Weize, "The Recording Information," in Wolfe, Hank Snow, The Singing Ranger, 5-7; Hank Snow quoted in Dennis Hensley, "Hank Snow," Country Musicians: From the Editors of Guitar Player, Keyboard, and Frets Magazines, ed. Judie Eremo (Cupertino: Grove Press, 1987) 120.

music executives received the genre's most accomplished singer, the program's emancipator from regionalism. In body and spirit, Foley replaced Roy Acuff as the Opry's central figure and became its torchbearer into the modern period. Surrounding himself with Nashville's finest musicians, he produced the most professional sounding recordings of the postwar decade, all bearing the brand of his full-bodied voice.

Possessing an incomparable ability to sing blues, country and gospel with universal mastery, Foley towered above his peers as country music's most versatile singer. He submerged himself into every song in search of its meaning, a process that allowed him to deliver novelty material, blues numbers, and religious pieces with equal conviction. With a cosmopolitan look, a down-home manner, and a remarkable voice, Foley dispelled country music's hillbilly stereotype, replacing it with the image of an amiable and courteous southerner.

Born in Blue Lick, Kentucky, Clyde "Red" Foley (1910-1968) first demonstrated his appreciation for music as a young boy, playing harmonica around his father's country store. When his father accepted a guitar as payment on an account one day around 1920, he learned the basics of that instrument as well. In high school, a music teacher took note of his vocal talent and prodded him into entering a local singing competition, the beginning of a process that led to a scholarship from Georgetown College, where he concentrated his study in voice and music. When a talent scout from WLS offered him a radio job making sixty dollars a week, Foley quit school and left for Chicago. Together with Karl Davis, Harty Taylor and others, he became a charter member of the Cumberland Ridge Runners, specializing in comedy

as well as singing. He remained in Chicago until the late 1930s, when he left with John Lair to inaugurate the Renfro Valley Barn Dance. After a brief period in Cincinnati, he returned to Chicago around 1940, where he teamed with Red Skelton on NBC's Avalon Time and reappeared on the National Barn Dance. After making several records with the Cumberland Ridge Runners, he signed his first individual contract with Decca in late 1941. During the war, he made several appearances at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station and opened a dude ranch near Peoria. His popularity skyrocketed during this time, especially in Chicago, where he played to 210,000 people at the Chicago Rodeo in 1944. By the end of the war, "Ramblin' Red Foley" was appearing on three network shows (the WLS' National Barn Dance, Avalon Time, and Plantation Party) and receiving favorable reviews from the trade papers. In 1945, he made some recordings with Lawrence Welk and his Orchestra and earned a new nickname: "The Sweet Singer of Songs of the Hills and Plains." With his national popularity and attractive image, Foley appeared as the perfect candidate to replace Roy Acuff as headliner of the network portion of the Grand Ole Opry.²²

²² "Red Foley: Exclusive Decca Recording Artist," unidentified clipping, Red Foley Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary, 292; Reta Spears-Stewart, "The Ozark Jubilee Saga--Red Foley," Red Foley Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Rumble, Red Foley; Jinnie Rodgers, "Corn Belt Comments," Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol 2, No. 1 (September 1940): 7; George A. Barker, "A Traveling Man's Gotta Zigzag," The Tennessean 2 February 1964; Ronnie F. Pugh, liner notes, Vintage Country, Franklin Mint Record Society LP FMRS CW 021 -- FMRS CW 022, 1982; Rich Kienzle, "Red Foley," unidentified clipping, Red Foley Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Wolfe, Kentucky Country, 134; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 56, No. 32 (5 August 1944): 64; "Profiles of Folk Artists: Ramblin' Red Foley," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book, (New York: Billboard Publishing Co., Inc.,

Not surprisingly, the Grand Ole Opry crowd reacted tentatively to the smooth singer from Chicago with ties to Lawrence Welk. Foley recalls his own trepidations:

I guess I never was more scared than I was the night I replaced Roy Acuff on the network part of the Opry... (The audience) thought I was a Chicago slicker who had come down to pass himself off as a country boy and bump Roy out of his job. It took me about a year to get adjusted.

After an initial period of uneasiness, both the host and the crowd became more comfortable with the arrangement, with Foley's heartfelt interpretation of sentimental and religious pieces particularly instrumental in winning over the audience. After returning to the South, Foley's career as a country music performer soared, recording forty-nine top ten hits in the postwar decade. With Opry exposure, he retained his popularity throughout the nation, scoring four separate million-selling records in the early 1950s (three gospel numbers and "Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy"). Released in late 1949, "Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy" went to the top of both the pop and country charts, with Foley's version outselling versions by Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby. In 1950, Billboard acknowledged that "few records in the history of the business have sold with comparable speed and scope." Despite all the success, Foley remained on the Opry and toured with package shows promoted by the WSM Artists' Service Bureau. A string of shows in 1949 with Ernest Tubb and Little Jimmy Dickens grossed \$48,000 in five days. In 1953, Marty Landau (the Opry promoter on the West

1944) 364; Red Foley, advertisement, The Billboard 17 February 1945: 16; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 57, No. 27 (7 July 1945): 75.

Coast) set up a seven-day tour that brought in over \$31,000. By that time, the singer commanded \$2,000 a performance. Foley finally stepped down as host of the Opry in the spring of 1953; the following year he signed with RadiOzark Enterprises as host of the Ozark Jubilee, broadcast from Springfield, Missouri. ABC initially broadcast twenty-five minutes of the two-hour radio show over its network in 1954; early the next year, it brought a one-hour video version of the Saturday night program to prime time television. In 1957, the Wall Street Journal estimated that 4.4 million American homes tuned into the show weekly. While Foley had few country hits after 1955's "Satisfied Mind," he retained his national popularity well into the 1960s.²³

An examination of Red Foley's recorded output of the postwar decade illustrates the true breadth of his singing abilities and indicates the reasons for his phenomenal popularity. After the war, Foley continued to make records in the western pop style, with full vocals accompanied by accordion, clarinet, and other pop music

²³ Red Foley quoted in Barker, "A Traveling Man's Gotta Zigzag"; Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits, 111-113; Wolfe, Kentucky Country, 135-136; Allen Churchill, "Tin-Pan Alley's Git-tar Blues," New York Times Magazine 15 July 1951; The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 8 (25 February 1950): cover; Foley Grosses 31G On Coast," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 23 (6 June 1953): 44; "Coast One-Nighters for Opry Folk," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 14 (4 April 1953): 17; "Red Foley Quits as 'Opry' Star After Seven Years," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 18 (2 May 1953): 3; "Foley Signs with RadiOzark, TT for Personal Appearances," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 16 (17 April 1954): 16; "Foley to Air From Ozarks," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 32 (7 August 1954): 1; "Radio Ozark-ABC, Set C & W Video Series," The Billboard Vol. 67, No. 1 (1 January 1955): 2; George Carney, "Country Music and the Radio: A Historical Geographic Assessment," Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal Vol. 11, No. 2 (April 1974): 25; Howard Turtle, "Ozark Folk Tunes and Comedy Make Springfield a TV Center," Kansas City Star 29 January 1956; Clarence B. Newman, "Homespun Harmony: Hillbilly Music Sells Rural Customers, Keeps Record Counters Busy," The Wall Street Journal 3 May 1957; Rumble, Red Foley.

instrumentation. On "Foggy River" and "Lay Down Your Soul," however, he reveals his appreciation for blues and gospel. With "Freight Train Boogie" and "Rockin' Chair Money," he begins the switch to more up-tempo country material. Sometime in 1946, he formed the Cumberland Valley Boys, a group of talented musicians that included at one time or another Zeke and Zeb Turner on electric guitars, Tommy Jackson on fiddle, Smokey Lohman or Jerry Byrd on steel, and Louis Innis on rhythm guitar. Noticeably, the fiddle rarely makes a prominent appearance on Red Foley's early postwar records, lending the group somewhat of a pop sound. Foley's leanings towards the blues and gospel material and Jerry Byrd's work, however, tend to keep the group grounded in the country genre. When Turner, Innis, and Byrd left for Cincinnati's WLW in late 1948, Foley began working with two talented young guitarists, Hank Garland and Grady Martin, both of whom adapted well to Foley's style. Garland's playing on hits like "Tennessee Saturday Night" and "Sugarfoot Rag" soon became a characteristic of Foley's early fifties sound. In Martin, Foley secured another versatile guitarist who added jazz and blues touches to a number of recordings. Foley recorded a number of impressive blues numbers with these guitarists, most notably "Open Up that Door," "Midnight," "Stranded in Deep Water," and the appropriately titled "Deep Blues." "Midnight" proved so authentic that it began selling well in locations where rhythm and blues records proliferated. Foley's greatest vocal talent lay in gospel numbers with blues overtones. After working with the Delmore Brothers and Grandpa Jones as the Brown's Ferry Four on King Records, Foley began a fertile association with the Jordanares, another top-notch male vocal

group. "Milky White Way," "It is No Secret (What God Can Do)," "(There'll Be) Peace in the Valley (for Me)," "The Last Mile of the Way," and many others established Foley as country music's most expressive male gospel singer.²⁴

In addition to excelling at the blues and gospel idioms, Foley breathed considerable life into up-tempo novelty and pop material. On many occasions, the lyrics make little sense, but Foley manages to convincingly sell light-hearted pieces like "M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I," "Birmingham Bounce," and "Sugar Foot Rag" with the help of his talented group of musicians. Vocally, Decca teamed him up with a number of female singers, including the Andrew Sisters, Roberta Lee, and Judy Martin. With Lee, Foley turns "Night Train to Memphis" into a boogie woogie tour de force while the presence of the Andrew Sisters on "Hang Your Head in Shame" helps transform one of his wartime hits into an effective contemporary pop piece. For good measure, Decca also paired him with Kitty Wells for several honky tonk pieces, with the success of "One By One" demonstrating the soundness of their judgment and the evocative abilities of the two singers. In the mid-fifties, Foley continued to record gospel ("Someone to Care"), blues ("Walkin' in the Cold, Cold Rain"), and pop ("Thank You for Calling") without ever losing his footing. With the Anita Kerr Singers, he recorded "Hearts of Stone," a number that indicates Foley's potential in

²⁴ Colin Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1994) 61, 89; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 46 (13 November 1948): 38; Roger M. Williams, Hank Williams (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1981) 24; Pugh, Vintage Country, 3; Rich Kienzle, "Hank Garland," Country Musicians: From the Editors of Guitar Player, Keyboard, and Frets Magazines, 45-46; "Recent Foley Diskings Sell 1/2 Million Copies," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 46 (15 November 1952): 20.

the rock field as well. Just as Foley never fully embraced pop, though, he rejected an affiliation with the more youth-orientated musical phenomenon. Red Foley's most magnetic features were his unpretentiousness and quiet dignity, two characteristics that clashed with the flamboyance of rock. Whether in Chicago, Nashville, or Springfield, Missouri, Foley remained a country boy at heart, even as he applied his sophisticated vocal training to the music of his youth. Foley succeeded by embracing his roots and surrounding himself with like-minded musicians. Topping the charts with "Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy," he disproved the industry's misgivings about country artists' marketability and lent an air of professionalism to music produced in the South. In remaining on the Opry as its genial host even after he chalked up a series of million-selling records, Foley helped establish both the program and the city of Nashville as the focal point of country music. Despite the magnitude of these accomplishments, Foley's greatest legacy remains the impressive collection of recordings he produced in the postwar period. No other country singer ever demonstrated more versatility in his singing abilities and few appealed to a wider array of listeners.

All of the aforementioned country-pop acts maintained a semi-permanent affiliation with the Grand Ole Opry at one time or another in the postwar decade. On the West Coast, a country music scene continued to thrive, even with the nucleus of country-pop moving eastward. Of the remaining country-pop artists located there, only one achieved a measure of success in reaching an interregional audience that rivaled those based in the South after the war. Adding various portions of pop,

western, honky tonk and western swing to a country stock, Jimmy Wakely concocted a musical recipe that appealed to listeners from coast to coast and established him as a major figure in country music's move towards national legitimacy.

Born near Mineola, Arkansas in 1914, Jimmy Wakely spent most of his early years in Oklahoma, where his family moved when he was four. As a youngster, he enjoyed listening to early country artists like Carson Robison, Vernon Dalhart, and Jimmie Rodgers; after his father bought him a guitar, he began learning Rodgers' songs. In his teens, he also became interested in gospel (through singing schools he attended), popular music (through his appreciation of Bing Crosby), and western swing (via Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys). In 1937, he made his radio debut on Oklahoma City's WKY, eventually building a group called the Bell Boys with Johnny Bond and Dick Rhinehardt. Wakely remained in Oklahoma City until 1940, when Gene Autry invited him to California as a regular on Melody Ranch and a member of his touring group. Eventually, Jimmy Wakely formed his own band and began appearing around California at fairs, rodeos, and theatres as well as on the Foreman Phillips ballroom circuit. Additionally, Wakely found time to make several motion pictures in the singing cowboy vein and produce several hits for Decca during the war, most notably "Too Late" and "I'm Sending You Red Roses." In late 1946 he signed with Capitol Records, releasing a number of enormously successful duets with pop singer Margaret Whiting in addition to solo offerings with his country band. In 1949, Billboard named him the third most popular singer on the nation's jukeboxes. Wakely rode the wave of success into the early fifties, touring with Bob Hope and making

several guest appearances on the network portion of the Grand Ole Opry and a variety of television programs throughout the country. In 1953, Wakely switched to Coral Records, where he produced his own records as well as serving as head of the label's country music division. While he never completely abandoned country music, he increasingly recorded with orchestras and toured with large ensembles. Wakely consistently walked a fine line between pop and country; to his credit, he retained a following among listeners in both genres.²⁵

Wakely's recordings of the postwar decade reveal his considerable versatility as a singer as well as his foresight into country-pop's potential. On his early pressings for Capitol, he used accordion, clarinets, steel guitar, and fiddles interchangeably in a variety of musical settings. In "Easy to Please," "Milkcow Blues," and "Mine All Mine," he keeps the arrangements simple and bluesy, leaving plenty of room for outstanding guitar work from Jack Rivers (on lead) and Pete Martinez (on steel). On

²⁵ Rich Kienzle, liner notes, Jimmy Wakely: Vintage Collections, Capitol CD 7243-8-36591-2-8, 1996; Jimmy Wakely, interview with Douglas B. Green, Burbank, 25 June 1974, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Douglas B. Green, "The Singing Cowboy: An American Dream," Journal of Country Music Vol. 7, No. 2 (May 1978): 48; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 234; Gerald F. Vaughn, "Foreman Phillips: Western Swing's Kingmaker," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 53 (Spring 1979): 27; "Jimmy Wakely," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 17 (24 April 1948): 42; "Capitol Records Biography: Jimmy Wakely," Jimmy Wakely Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; "Jimmy Wakely," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 31 (2 August 1952): 74; "Top Male Singers on Juke Boxes--1949," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 9 (4 March 1950): 76; Bep Roberts, "Hank Thompson Survives Plane Crash," Capitol News Vol. 8, No. 12 (December 1950): 10; Bep Roberts, "Eddie Dean, Seventh Son of Seventh Son, Etches New Discs for Western Fans This Month," Capitol News Vol. 9, No. 2 (February 1951): 11; "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 42 (21 October 1950): 35; "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 2 (14 January 1950): 95; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 7 (13 February 1949): 30.

“Someday You’ll Call My Name” and “I Wish I Had a Nickel” he offers his strongest country performances, while “Dust” and “I Love You So Much it Hurts” serve as excellent examples of his pop potential. On a reworking of Floyd Tillman’s “One Has My Name (The Other Has My Heart),” he perfects the country-pop approach, blending steel guitar, clarinet, and harmonica sounds with hard-edged lyrics sung in a vibrato style. Wakely explains the arrangement of the song and offers an explanation of its considerable success:

I saw that Tillman had something going there, so I decided to do it. And I used clarinets and a harmonica in harmony. And I used a Gordon Jenkins’ type one-finger piano. In other words, it was the pop sounds of that day to give it a pop western sound. Floyd Tillman had two fiddles, strictly what we called a string band. Well mine went on up to the top of the charts and passed Floyd’s because mine had a wider appeal and would get on jukeboxes in the better restaurants, if you will, that wouldn’t put on stringbands. There was some discrimination in those days and they would put on mine because it had a modern sound so I got away with it.

Despite being banned by the CBS and NBC networks for its adulterous implications, “One Has My Name, the Other has My Heart” achieved phenomenal success and firmly established Jimmy Wakely on the country scene. In 1949, he recorded his first duet with songstress Margaret Whiting, a pop singer with the Capitol label since the early 1940s. Wakely maintains that he taught Whiting how to slur her singing to make it sound country; judging from the success of their first duet (“Slipping

Around"/"Wedding Bells"), he succeeded. Later that year, the duet's appearance at the Ryman drew a crowd of over 4,000; additionally, they made the cover of Billboard. Not surprisingly, the success of their debut single led to several other Wakely/Whiting pairings, including "I'll Never Slip Around Again," "Let's Go to Church Next Sunday Morning," and "I Don't Want to be Free." In between recordings with Whiting, Wakely released an array of straight country ("Solid South"), western swing ("Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon"), and pop ("Rainbow at Midnight"). Wakely also demonstrated that he was not gun-shy about recording with full orchestras, and explains his purpose for doing so: "It's always been my contention that country music should be sold to the, call it the upper echelon, or what have you, (so) I started early in my career using orchestras, large bands like Nelson Riddle...and Les Baxter." At the same time, he rarely played straight pop for fear of losing his country base. In 1951, he turned down a potentially lucrative New York engagement because his western dates consistently brought bigger grosses. Switching to Coral Records, he continued on with the eclectic approach, sometimes recording without any country instrumentation (e.g. "You Can't Break the Chains of Love") and at other times inserting a crashing steel guitar solo right in the middle of an otherwise straight pop song (e.g. "I've Had My Share of Sorrow"). In the early fifties, Wakely chose to remain on the West Coast, enjoying the autonomy that the Coral deal involved. In remaining steadfast to his country course, Wakely continued to produce some of the most interesting country recordings of the mid-fifties. Carrying on the western pop tradition established in the early 1940s, Jimmy Wakely kept the smooth

sounds of the California coast alive while making his own contribution to the country genre with his unique musical vision.²⁶

The crossover success of artists like Jimmy Wakely, Red Foley and Eddy Arnold in the late forties and early fifties indicated to many observers that the national acceptance country music enjoyed during World War II was neither temporal nor incidental. Country-pop artists in general worked to solidify the achievements of wartime singers like Al Dexter and Tex Ritter by offering listeners a soft-edged version of country music that belied the hillbilly stereotype. The sophisticated sound of country-pop attracted northerners seeking an alternative to bland pop and southerners not particularly receptive to honky tonk. It initiated a major breakthrough for country music into the American middle class, with Nashville becoming the primary beneficiary of the development. Ironically, country-pop initially arose in Hollywood, with Wakely, Ritter, Gene Autry, Elton Britt, and the Sons of the Pioneers all making important contributions to the sub-genre's vocal and instrumental development before 1946 with their peculiar mixture of western and popular idioms. While these artists continued to produce hits after the war, the focus of country-pop shifted east after Arnold and Foley brought the sub-genre to fruition with their blend of smooth singing, professional musicianship, and non-western lyrics. As Nashville became the home of country-pop, artists who remained in California focused their

²⁶ Jimmy Wakely, interview; "NBC and CBS Ban 'One Has My Name,'" The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 9 (26 February 1949): 20; "Music--As Written," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 47 (19 November 1949): 40; The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 41 (8 October 1949): cover; "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 37 (15 September 1951): 149; "Margaret Whiting," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 31 (2 August 1952): 74.

attention on creating music for the West Coast audience. Taking a cue from western swing, they embraced danceable rhythms and novelty lyrics on the way to reviving the blues tradition in country music. Their success spawned a country-blues renaissance and set the stage for showdown within the industry for creative control.

CHAPTER 7—FROM COUNTRY-BLUES RENAISSANCE TO ROCKABILLY REVOLUTION: THE COLD WAR BETWEEN CALIFORNIA, MEMPHIS, AND NASHVILLE

In the late forties, the Nashville and California country music scenes vied for the honor of country music's nucleus. Building on the success of cowboy singers and western swing performers, California remained a hotspot for country music throughout the forties, mainly due to its flourishing dance halls and the multitude of country music listeners located on the West Coast. In the early 1950s, country music performers continued to make frequent treks there for personal appearances. Nashville did not rise to its level of predominance until the mid-fifties, with its sanction of country-pop and soft honky tonk and effective promotional infrastructure providing the impetus for its advancement. In the mid-late forties and even into the early fifties, however, California continued to rival Nashville as "Hillbilly H.Q."¹

Three factors contributed to southern California's thriving country music scene in the postwar period: the sharp increase in the number of potential listeners there, the television industry's receptiveness to the genre, and the success of LA-based Capitol Records. While the Grand Ole Opry offered prestige to country music performers, southern California provided greater opportunities for exposure and personal appearance revenue. Before Jim Denny and the WSM Artists' Service Bureau built up a head of steam in the early 1950s, country music artists viewed Los Angeles as the premier touring area of the country. Between 1940 and 1952, the city increased its

¹ Joe Bleeden, "Hollywood Now Hillbilly H. Q.," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 47 (24 November 1951): 1, 18.

population to over two million (a thirty-six percent increase), with metropolitan Los Angeles witnessing a fifty-eight percent increase in residents and the city's suburbs growing by eighty-one percent in the same period. By 1952, 6.5 million people lived in southern California, many with money in their pockets and an affinity for country music. The proliferation of country radio shows and western swing dancehalls that emerged in World War II continued to draw crowds after the war. In late 1946, 20,000 to 30,000 people filled the ballrooms on Saturday nights in Los Angeles alone. The coming of television in the late forties put a dent in these figures and hurt many dance-orientated western swing acts, but many other country music performers made the transition to the new medium and took advantage of opportunities it offered.²

Several country music shows debuted in southern California in the late forties and early fifties. In 1952, fifteen such programs appeared on Los Angeles television every week. While Spade Cooley's show deserves the honor of Los Angeles' first regular country and western television program, two other series emerged in the late forties and early fifties that eclipsed Cooley in stature and network exposure:

Hometown Jamboree and Town Hall Party. Cliffie Stone was the creative force behind Hometown Jamboree, which debuted on local LA television in 1949. A native of southern California, Stone (1917-1997) first appeared on radio as a musician and comedian in the mid-thirties. During the war, he emerged as a major figure on the

² Bleeden, "Hollywood Now Hillbilly H. Q."; Norman Nelson, "Spotlight on Southern California: The Hard to Believe Market," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 17 (25 April 1953): 36, 38; Cliffie Stone, "Western Dances Still Drawing Especially in Southern California," Capitol News Vol. 4, No. 10 (October 1946): 14.

California music scene, hosting an early morning radio show (Wake Up Ranch) and establishing himself as a noted bassist, producer, and talent scout for Capitol Records. Sometime in the mid-forties, he inaugurated the Dinner Bell Round-Up, a noontime program broadcast over KXLA. Stone also appeared on the Hollywood Barn Dance in the mid-late forties before opening his own dance hall in Placentia. Eventually he moved to 2,600 capacity Legion Stadium in El Monte, where he began broadcasting Cliffie Stone's Hometown Jamboree over KLAC-TV, opposite Cooley's show before both appeared back-to-back on KLAC-TV. Hometown Jamboree offered listeners an eclectic blend of country and pop music with an outstanding house band that sounded anything but hillbilly. With a who's-who of southern California performers that included Tennessee Ernie Ford, Harold Hensley, Eddie Kirk, Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant, Hometown Jamboree soon became a fixture on Los Angeles television.³

Broadcast from Compton, California, with a cast that included (at various times) such notables as Tex Ritter, Johnny Bond, Merle Travis, and Lefty Frizzell, Town Hall Party offered viewers another Los Angeles-based country television show in the mid-1950s. Put together by LA promoter William Wagnon, the show debuted on local radio in 1952; soon thereafter, it acquired a network affiliate as well as a spot

³ Johnny Sippel, "Country and Western," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 11 (15 March 1952): 82; June Bundy, "Names Make Rapid Strides of TV Webs; Corral Not Full Yet," The Billboard Vol. 67, No. 23 (21 May 1955): 15; Daniel C. Cooper, Lefty Frizzell: The Honky-Tonk Life of Country Music's Greatest Singer (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995) 156-157; Cliffie Stone, interview with John W. Rumble, Nashville, 27 March 1992, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Rich Kienzie, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Masters (Nashville: Liberty Records, 1994) 7-9; "Cliffie Stone's Hometown Jamboree," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 51 (17 December 1949): 10; The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 17 (29 April 1950): cover.

on local television. While the program showcased West Coast-based acts, it also welcomed popular country music performers from Nashville. Not surprisingly, some competitive antagonism brewed between Los Angeles and Nashville in the 1950s, as Cliffie Stone points out: "The West Coast resented the hell out of Nashville (for) saying they were the home of country music, because they really weren't, you know, but they were smart." The success of LA-based country television programs and others like WLW's Midwestern Hayride (broadcast Sundays on NBC-TV for a time) indicated Nashville's sluggishness in embracing television. Part of its hesitation resulted from the limitations of its market potential. An early country music show on Nashville's WSM-TV in 1950 (Tennessee Jamboree) reached listeners only as far as the Kentucky border. Opry management tolerated the California programs, but when Red Foley relocated to Springfield and ABC announced its plans to broadcast a television version of the Ozark Jubilee, it moved to create a video version of the Grand Ole Opry for national broadcast. To this end, they commenced filming of The Country Show: With Stars of the Grand Ole Opry in late 1954, which debuted on network television the following January. Television versions of Town Hall Party, The Ozark Jubilee, and Midwestern Hayride all outlasted the Opry's Country Show, which only remained on the air for two years. In the mid-1950s, the Nashville country music industry accepted defeat in the video medium and concentrated its efforts on promotion, recording, and, of course, the radio Grand Ole Opry.⁴

⁴ Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 202; Johnny Bond, The Tex Ritter Story (New York: Chappell Music Co., 1976): 152-154; Rich Kienzle, Merle Travis: Guitar Rags and a Too Fast Past

While California, migration gave West Coast country acts an audience and television provided them with exposure, Capitol records afforded them distribution of their pressings. Established in 1942 by Glenn Wallichs and Johnny Mercer, Capitol emerged as the primary outlet for West Coast country music recordings in the postwar period. California country music and Capitol matured hand-in-hand, with artists like Tex Williams, Tex Ritter, and Jimmy Wakely all contributing to the label's astonishing growth in sales figures, from \$200,000 in 1942 to over \$13 million dollars in 1951. Behind the scenes, A & R men like Cliffie Stone, Lee Gillette, and Ken Nelson secured and recorded the finest country music singers and musicians that southern California had to offer, while Capitol's first representative in Nashville (W. D. "Dee" Kilpatrick) concentrated on landing Grand Ole Opry talent. Capitol Records opened its doors to all types of country music performers from different parts of the country, but their greatest success after the war came with eclectic, California-based acts like Hank Thompson, Merle Travis, Tennessee Ernie Ford, and the aforementioned Williams and Wakely. These artists surrounded themselves with musicians willing to experiment with different sounds and styles in an effort to create music that appealed to a variety of listeners. California country recorded by Capitol

(Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 48; Cliffie Stone, interview; Edward Morris, "New, Improved, Homogenized: Country Radio Since 1950," Country: The Music and the Musicians, eds. Paul Kingbury and Alan Axelrod (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) 97; "Midwestern Hayride," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 21 (24 May 1952): 9; Colin Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1994) 199; Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 198; Bundy, "Names Make Rapid Strides of TV Webs," 15; Gene Plotnik, "Big Push Due on 'Opry' TV," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 46 (13 November 1954): 1, 100.

often bore little resemblance to country music produced east of the Continental Divide; instead, it more readily bore the imprints of sophistication and musical experimentation, with less emphasis on lyrical quality and evocative vocals. Closer to mainstream pop and western swing than to honky tonk or the music of the progressives, postwar California country was more light-hearted and spirited than heavy-headed and spiritual. Capitol Records offered a polished and professional product for urban listeners initially drawn to Al Dexter's novelty records and the energetic version of western swing envisioned by Spade Cooley. Capitol Records did not hold a monopoly on country music talent in California, but it soon became a stronghold for West Coast performers seeking to distance themselves from hillbilly music, honky tonk, and even the roots-based country pop produced by southern-bred acts.⁵

Wartime western pop singers affiliated with Capitol like Tex Ritter and Wesley Tuttle along with other California-based acts performers like Gene Autry helped lay the foundation for the development of the country-pop genre in the mid-late forties fully realized by Eddy Arnold, Red Foley and other Southeastern acts. The country-blues sub-genre, on the other hand, had roots in the South but matured in California.

⁵ Russell Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven: The American Popular Music Business in the Twentieth Century (1988; New York: Da Capo Press, 1996) 217; "A Decade of Growth and Success," The Billboard Vol. 64, No. 31 (2 August 1952): 51; "Capitol Drive in Folk Field," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 35 (2 September 1950): 12; "Capitol Folk Chief Goes Nashville," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 30 (29 July 1950): 12; "Cliffie Stone Heads Capitol Westerns," Capitol News Vol. 4, No. 4 (April 1946): 12; Ken Nelson, interview with Douglas B. Green, Ventura, 2 April 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville.

Despite Jimmy Wakely's success, most successful California country acts did not veer towards the country-pop fusion. With dancehalls jumping and migrants still coming, they tended to lean towards more propulsive music suitable for the ballroom milieu and the West Coast state of mind. They liked the energy of western swing but cared little for the sound of the fiddle; they favored the polish and escapism of western pop, but felt averse to its blandness. Mixing the jazz and blues of western swing with the gloss of western pop, they produced a western blues hybrid, the first of three types of country-blues produced in the postwar period. Unlike the African American derived blues produced by artists affiliated with the King record label and youth-orientated rockabilly, western blues was aimed at urban, middle-class adults attracted to its humorous lyrics and danceable sound. Backed by high-caliber musicians, Merle Travis, Tennessee Ernie Ford and Rose Maddox fronted the three premier western blues bands based in California after World War II. While each mixed country and blues in a different way, all shared a penchant for up-beat melodies and novelty lyrics. Their emphasis on light-hearted lyrical fare soon became an identifying characteristic of western blues and an indicator of trends in country music at large.

Beginning with "Pistol Packin' Mama" and continuing on after the war with Tex Williams' "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)," country artists found novelty numbers the best way to reach urban (and suburban) American listeners. In 1954, Steve Sholes noted the development of the novelty song as one of the principal reasons for country music's postwar surge. The percentage of novelty songs on the charts dramatically increased after 1945. Songs of this type maintained a plurality on

the charts in every year during the post-war decade except 1949. Even honky tonkers jumped on the novelty bandwagon; in fact, honky tonk's rise to prominence in the early 1950s directly coincided with its embracement of more light-hearted song material as well as the rise of a softer vocal approach to the sub-genre. As the nation entered the fifties, both country and pop listeners demonstrated a decided preference for novelty and up-beat lyrics. Country music performers of all types recognized this trend; country-blues acts, in particular, and especially those located on the West Coast, emphasized humorous subject matter as a means to attracting the postwar urban audience.⁶

Of the aforementioned western blues acts, Merle Travis proved the most deft at writing clever and humorous lyrics. Additionally, Travis was an accomplished musician and the most influential standard guitarist of the postwar period. Few performers could match his wit in writing and mastery of the fingerpicking guitar style. Born in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, Merle Travis first learned to play the five-string banjo from his father around the age of eight. A few years later, after one of his older brothers built him a guitar, he began absorbing the fingerpicking style indigenous to the area. Rich Kienzle traces the unique playing method back to the early part of the century, and notes the contribution of two black guitarists, Sylvester Weaver and Arnold Shultz, to its development. Gradually, through interaction in the coal mines and general musical diffusion, white guitarists in the area like Kennedy

⁶ Steve Sholes, "Developing Country Scene: Styles Change and Quality Improves. Artists, Firms, Increase in Ten Years," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (22 May 1954): 18.

Jones, Lester “Plucker” English, Mose Rager, and Ike Everly picked up on the technique and added their own embellishments. Travis heard Rager and Everly playing at local parties and soon adapted the style. Over the years, Travis referred to the technique as “thumb picking”: “That’s a style of playing with your thumb. You more or less play what a piano player plays with his left hand—the accompaniment—and you play your melody with your finger or fingers, in my case, I just use one finger.” Not receptive to the idea of working in the coal mines, Travis joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) around 1935, staying only until he saved enough money to purchase a new Gretsch guitar. In 1936, while visiting one of his brothers in Evansville, Indiana, Travis joined a local band called the Tennessee Tomcats and began appearing on radio. The next year he toured with Clayton McMichen’s Georgia Wildcats before settling in at Cincinnati’s WLW in 1938 as a member of a western band called the Drifting Pioneers. Over the course of the next two years, Travis introduced thousands of young guitarists to the Kentucky thumb-picking style through his shows on 50,000-watt WLW, among them, Chet Atkins and Joe Maphis. Years later, Travis commented on the significance of the WLW broadcasts, all the while acknowledging his teachers: “I was probably the first thumb-picker, finger-style player on radio, but I give them all the credit because that’s where I learned it, from Mose Rager and Ike Everly.” The war broke up the band, with Travis remaining on WLW as a member of the Boone County Jamboree. After striking up a friendship and professional relationship, Travis and Grandpa Jones met Syd Nathan at a local record store while shopping for some gospel material for their radio show. With Jones,

Travis made his first recordings on Nathan's King label in late 1943, just before joining the Marines. Discharged early the next year, Travis relocated to California, joining Ray Whitley's popular western swing band and acting as King's West Coast A & R man briefly. In the California dancehalls, Travis learned the importance of a full-bodied, lively sound. Years later, he reflected on the changes precipitated by the war: "(In) the first groups I played with, we played very few dances because we didn't have amplified instruments...but after the war, in order to eat, I learned that people liked to get together and dance and hear upbeat tunes." He eventually designed his own solidbody electric guitar, with inventor Paul Bigsby building it for him in 1948. Travis recalls the impetus behind his design: "I kept wondering why steel guitars would sustain the sound so long, when a hollow body electric guitar like mine would fade out real quick. I came to the conclusion it was all because the steel guitar was solid." Once on the California music scene, Travis gained a reputation for his jovial spirit, innovative playing at dances, and stellar session work. In 1946, he signed with Capitol Records.⁷

⁷ Charles K. Wolfe, Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982) 110; Rich Kienzle, "The Evolution of Country Fingerpicking: From Sylvester Weaver to Chet Atkins and Beyond," Guitar Player Vol. 18, No. 5 (May 1984): 38-39; Mark Humphrey, "Merle Travis," Country Musicians: From the Editors of Guitar Player, Keyboard, and Frets Magazines, ed. Judie Eremo (Cupertino: Grove Press, 1987) 124-125; Merle Travis, interview with Douglas B. Green, n.p., 17 October 1975, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; Rich Kienzle, liner notes, The Best of Merle Travis, Rhino CD R2 70993, 1990; Bob Baxter, "Merle Travis: The Man, the Music," Guitar Player Vol. 10, No. 9 (September 1976): 28; Merle Travis quoted in Les Pouliot, John Thayer & Don Bruce Together Present The History of Country Music; A 36 Hour Radio Documentary (Memphis: J. Thayer & D. Bruce Together, 1970) 215; Rich Kienzle, Merle Travis, 6, 10, 22, 39; Mark Humphrey, "Interview: Merle Travis"

Ironically, Merle Travis played very little guitar at his first Capitol sessions, with Cliffie Stone and Lee Gillette encouraging a bouncy trumpet/accordion dominated sound. Judging from the success of jaunty songs like "Cincinnati Lou," "No Vacancy," and "What a Shame," the formula worked perfectly. Much of the success of these songs and others like "Divorce Me C.O.D." "Sweet Temptation," and "So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed," however, must be credited to Travis' superior songwriting skills. As Rich Kienzle points out, "Merle wrote colloquial lyrics, spiced with American slang that helped his songs gain instant public acceptance." Travis possessed a keen ability to find humor in the mundane and looked to pop culture and news headlines for material. The songwriter explains the creative process behind a song like "Divorce Me, C.O.D.":

I came up with an idea and I went to Cliffie Stone and said, 'Hey, I've got an idea to make a record with a word that has never been used on record. I bet people would play this on the jukeboxes when they're out drinking beer.' He said, 'What is it?' I said, 'Divorce.' He said, 'Oh Lord! Wow! I don't think they'd ever allow you to record a song about divorce.' I said, 'Well, I'll make it kind of funny and fast.' He said, 'Well, see what you can do.'

Old Time Music No. 36 (Summer 1981): 10; Chet Atkins with Bill Neely Country Gentleman (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1974) 56; Merle Travis quoted in Dorothy Horstman, "Merle Travis: Memories of a Country Guitar Genius," Country Music Vol. 4, No. 1 (October 1975): 32; "Boone County Jamboree," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 12 (20 March 1943): 8; Merle Travis, "Recollections of Merle Travis, 1944-1955, Part 2" John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 55 (Fall 1979): 137-139; Mark Humphrey, "Interview: Merle Travis, Part IV," Old Time Music No. 39 (Winter-Spring 1982-1983): 24-25.

Released in 1946, the song became one the year's biggest hits, despite a ban placed on it by two networks. In 1947, he wrote the number one country song of the year ("Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!") for Tex Williams. Over the next few years, he wrote and recorded several other light-hearted hits for the label, including "Fat Gal," "Merle's Boogie Woogie," and "Crazy Boogie."⁸

Merle Travis achieved his greatest commercial success with novelty numbers, but his artistic legacy grew out of his appreciation of blues and folk material. In 1946, he recorded a number of "folk" songs at the behest of Capitol management that appeared on an album entitled "Songs of the Coal Mines." Backed by Cliffie Stone's incomparable bass playing and his own acoustic guitar, songs like "Dark as a Dungeon" and "Sixteen Tons" reveal Travis' incisive storytelling abilities. His guitar playing and singing on traditional numbers like "John Henry," "Nine-Pound Hammer," and "I Am a Pilgrim" (a song he learned from Mose Rager) were evocative and flawless. As the forties progressed, Travis drifted away from the accordion/trumpet approach and began delving deeper into the blues. On "I Got a Mean Old Woman," and "Start Even," Travis lowers the pitch of his voice and offers some remarkable blues licks on his guitar. Recorded with a vocal/instrumental group called the Whippoorwills, the penetrating blues of "Trouble, Trouble," amalgamates folk and pop music effortlessly. Meanwhile, the semi-autobiographical "Guitar Rag"

⁸ Kienzle, *Merle Travis*, 22; Merle Travis quoted in Mark Humphrey, "Interview: Merle Travis, Part III," *Old Time Music* No. 38 (Summer-Autumn 1982): 15; Lee Gillette, Cliffie Stone Hops From Control Booth to 'Mike' with New Capitol Contract," *Capitol News* Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 1947): 14; Joel Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits* (New York: Billboard Books, 1996) 325-326.

offers a humorous glimpse into the life of a popular Kentucky guitar picker and his effect on a small, rural community. Travis periodically returned to straight pop in the early fifties as well, most effectively on "Deep South" and "Let's Settle Down (to Runnin' Around Together)." Gradually, he moved closer to all-instrumental work, beginning with a remarkable cover of Gus Kahn's "I'll See You in My Dreams" and continuing on through the mid-fifties with numbers like "Blue Smoke" and "Walking the Strings." In 1955, his songwriting talents resulted in another million-seller when Tennessee Ernie Ford recorded "Sixteen Tons"; that same year, he began touring with Hank Thompson. Eventually, poor health and personal problems forced him into semi-retirement, but he continued to record into the 1980s. Along with a handful of other performers, he remains one of the towering figures in post-World War II country music. Esteemed by his colleagues for his songwriting and musical abilities, Merle Travis revolutionized country music with his guitar-playing style and lyrical devices. Disguising the blues in western and pop settings, Merle Travis reawakened country music performers' interest in the genre by demonstrating the musical freedom it provided.⁹

Tennessee Ernie Ford was another West Coast-based performer who explored the possibilities of mixing blues and country. While rural blues provided the framework for Travis' musical exploits, Ford looked to contemporary rhythm and blues for inspiration. Backed by the most flamboyant country musicians on the West Coast, Ford produced a high-octane version of western blues guaranteed to keep

⁹ Kienzle, Merle Travis, 2, 27.

dancers moving and listeners smiling. A natural comic and a gifted singer, he could shout the blues, play the hillbilly rube, and sing sophisticated pop with equal dexterity. As time wore on, he shed himself of the hillbilly caricature and renounced the aggressive sound and style that initially brought him fame and so clearly portended the rock movement. In the postwar decade, however, few country acts could match the energy and drive he and his band put into their performances.

Ernest Jennings Ford (1919-1991) grew up in Bristol, Tennessee, surrounded by music. As Ford recalls in his autobiography:

We sang at home, we sang at church, and we sang at weddings and funerals and at prisons or wherever there happened to be a need for it. Nor for money, mind you—we never got paid. We just enjoyed singing...It was part of our religion, part of our way of life.

Growing up two blocks away from a neighborhood predominantly populated by African Americans, Ford undoubtedly first gained exposure to black folk music in his youth. Additionally, with his family active Methodist church members, he also came to appreciate gospel music. Harboring dreams of becoming a professional singer, Ford left Bristol after two years as an announcer on WOPI to attend the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in the fall of 1939. The lure of radio (and the promise of a steady paycheck) led him back into announcing positions at stations in Atlanta and Knoxville before World War II broke out. After serving as an officer in the Army Air Corps during the conflict, Ford returned to Bristol briefly before leaving for San Bernardino, California to accept a job as radio announcer on KFXM. In California, he

initiated an early morning country show entitled Dude Ranch Party (later changed to Bar Nothin' Round-Up Time), offering rural comedy and spinning (and singing along with) the latest country hits as "Tennessee Ernie." In 1947, he moved to KXLA in Los Angeles, gaining popularity for his disc jockey show and his appearances on Cliffie Stone's noontime Dinner Bell Round-Up. When Stone's Hometown Jamboree debuted in 1949, Ford joined the cast as backup singer and comedian. Additionally, he signed with Capitol Records, charting several hits in his first two years with the label. In the fall of 1950, a duet with Kay Starr entitled "I'll Never Be Free" made its way into the pop and country top five. Gradually, Ford moved away from his hayseed "Tennessee Ernie" image, recording sophisticated big band numbers as well as making concert appearances at such elegant establishments as the Thunderbird Hotel in Las Vegas, the Copacabana in New York, and the London Palladium. In 1956, The Ford Show debuted on prime-time television and remained a popular program for the remainder of the fifties. In the late fifties he also recorded three successful gospel albums, and, in the early sixties, hosted another variety show on ABC-TV. He remained a popular fixture on television into the 1980s, before declining health forced him into retirement.¹⁰

¹⁰ Ford, Tennessee Ernie, This is My Story, This is My Song (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963) 75; Jan Hampton, "Tennessee Ernie Ford: Talking With the Pea Picker," Tennessee Ernie Ford Vertical File, Country Music Foundation, Nashville; Kienzle, liner notes, The Ultimate Tennessee Ernie Ford Collection, Razor and Tie CD RE 2134-2, 1997; Kienzle, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Masters, 4-14; Tennessee Ernie Ford, interview with Hugh Cherry, San Francisco, c. 1968, Country Music Foundation Oral History Collection, Nashville; "Cliffie Stone's Hometown Jamboree," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 51 (17 December 1950): 10.

While many people associate Ford with his popular gospel material, the singer actually began his recording career as a country comedy act. His first single for Capitol ("Milk 'Em in the Morning Blues") was basically an extension of his "Bar Nothin'" program, with Ford laying on an exaggerated accent, cracking jokes between verses, and singing comedic lyrics. An advertisement for the single in Billboard pictured Ford in overalls and a straw hat, looking every bit the country rube. On Ford's second session with Capitol, he began to move in another direction, closer to the boogie idiom so popular in the forties. A derivative of African American blues, boogie music burst on the LA scene during the war, with the release of Porky Freeman's "Porky's Boogie Woogie on the Strings." The Delmore Brothers became the first country band to fully embrace the musical style, releasing a series of popular "boogie" singles after the war, effervescent numbers with an eight-to-the-bar beat and heavy emphasis on bass percussion. With "Country Junction," Ford began to experiment with the motif, backed by Moon Mullican, Merle Travis, Cliffie Stone and a group of renowned California musicians. On "Smoky Mountain Boogie," Travis offers a stinging guitar solo while Ford's full-bodied singing adds the appropriate vocal punch. Sometime around 1950, lead guitarist Jimmy Bryant joined Ford's band of the next five years, which also included Bill Liebert on piano, Speedy West on pedal steel guitar, Harold Hensley on fiddle, Eddie Kirk on rhythm guitar, Cliffie Stone on bass, and Roy Harte on drums. One of country music's most vivacious ensembles, Ford's band played with a drive perfectly suited for the West Coast dance

scene. Stone, Kirk, and Harte provide a propulsive, heavy beat, while Liebert and Hensley add jazz and country flourishes to West's and Bryant's electric guitar work. A fan of jazz guitarist Barney Kessel, Jimmy Bryant helped popularize Leo Fender's solid body Broadcaster/Telecaster model, which later became the centerpiece of the Bakersfield Sound. Speedy West gained a reputation on the West Coast soon after arriving from Missouri in 1946. Developing a unique style characterized by crashing chords, fluctuations in volume, and rapid movement of the bar up and down the steel guitar's frets, West soon became a highly sought-after session musician. In the early 1950s, he recorded 6,000 records with 177 different singers. In 1948, he purchased the first pedal steel manufactured by Paul Bigsby and the next year joined Ford's band. By 1950, Bryant and West had developed a musical rapport that gave all of their recordings together a distinct and professional sound. Recorded in November 1950, Ford's "Shotgun Boogie" represents one of the band's many musical highlights. The lyrics made little sense and Capitol executives remained hesitant about releasing the single for several months, but when it finally made its way into the market it went straight to the top of the charts, where it stayed for ten weeks. Ford's spirited vocal and the outrageous musical atmosphere of the recording proved contagious. Perhaps because few of the musicians ever expected the song to find release, the recording has a no-holds-barred feel to it that unchains the band's free-spiritedness. Not surprisingly, several "boogie" songs followed, along with several other fast-paced numbers (i.e., "Hey, Mr. Cotton Picker," "You're My Sugar," and "Ain't Nobody's

Business”) that rolled along with infectious carefree abandon.¹¹

Ford’s “boogie” hits had roots in blues and jazz and were clearly escapist numbers, long on musical punch and short on meaning. Ford, however, could also sing quite expressively, particularly when the band slowed down the pace and when he tackled more substantive lyrical material. On “You’ll Find Her Name Written There,” he demonstrates the full power of his voice in a pop setting, and on two covers of songs brought to the pop charts by Frankie Laine (“Mule Train” and “Cry of the Wild Goose”) he rivals (if not surpasses) the popular vocalist’s interpretive abilities. When Capitol finally began gearing him to the pop market in the mid-fifties, Ford delivered sturdy vocal performances on “River of No Return” and “There is Beauty in Everything.” Ford’s postwar legacy, however, will remain his blues and boogie numbers. Paired with jazz/pop vocalist Kay Starr, Ford delves deep into the blues for “I’ll Never Be Free,” a major hit on both the pop and country charts. On “Sweet Temptation,” he transforms Merle Travis’ novelty song into a stomping rhythm and blues number, backed by a heavy rhythm section, Billy May’s big band orchestra, and stellar guitar work from Jimmy Bryant and West. Overcome with enthusiasm, Ford growls out an ecstatic yell right before a huge horn section and West begin trading high-powered musical barbs. On “Blackberry Boogie,” Ford and his band pull out all

¹¹ Tennessee Ernie Ford, advertisement, *The Billboard* Vol. 61, No. 14 (2 April 1949): 43; Rich Kienzle, “The Electric Guitar in Country Music: Its Evolution and Development,” *Guitar Player* Vol. 13, No. 11 (November 1979): 31, 33; Rich Kienzle, “Steel,” *Country Music* Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 1976): 61; Rich Kienzle, “Country Music Instruments and Players,” *The Country Music Book*, ed. Michael Mason (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1985) 246; Kienzle, *Tennessee Ernie Ford, Masters*, 10, 29-37; Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits*, 114.

the stops, running full-throttle all the way to rock with pounding drums, dynamic guitar solos, and roadhouse piano playing. On "I Don't Know," he gives contemporary blues shouters a run for their money on a song originally recorded by Willie Mabon on Chicago's Chess label. In early 1953, Ford and his band rocked the London Palladium, playing up-temps numbers like "Shot Gun Boogie," "Blackberry Boogie," "Kissin' Bug Boogie," and "Stack-O-Lee," and "I Don't Know" as well as slower songs such as "Kentucky Waltz" and Gershwin's "Summertime." Two years later, he moved closer to mainstream country and pop with a smooth reworking of Merle Travis' "Sixteen Tons" and the debut of his cosmopolitan television show. In the late fifties and sixties, he distanced himself from the blues shouting hillbilly image he projected as "Tennessee Ernie." At their rollicking peak, however, Ford and his band recorded some of the wildest and most uninhibited country music of the postwar era.¹²

The Maddox Brothers and Rose represent the only group on the West Coast in the late forties that could match the furious enthusiasm of Ford's band. A motley aggregation with more attitude than inherent talent, the Maddoxes built up a huge following in the California dancehalls with their unbridled blend of blues, honky tonk, and western swing. Rose Maddox stood at the front of the band as their flamboyant and charismatic lead singer. Together with Kitty Wells and Molly O'Day, Maddox helped establish a place for women in country music at a time when men

¹² "Kay Starr," The Billboard, Vol. 64, No. 31 (2 August 1952): 74; Leigh Vance, "Night Club—Vaude Reviews," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 16 (18 April 1953): 13, 50.

overwhelmingly dominated the genre. After the war, the most successful women in country music were female pop singers who had crossover hits. Some, like Kay Starr, began their careers in country music before becoming big band vocalists while others, like Jo Stafford and Margaret Whiting, initially made names for themselves in the pop idiom. Patti Page (originally from Oklahoma) surpassed all of the crossover women with her monster hit, "Tennessee Waltz," in 1950. Women's chances of succeeding within the parameters of country music appeared slim at best in the late forties and early fifties. The West Coast scene offered the greatest opportunities, with some female performers like Mary Ford and Rose Lee Maphis managing to break through the male barrier while working with their multi-talented husbands/guitarists (Les Paul and Joe Maphis). Maddox, Wells, and O'Day, however, pushed the envelope just a little further by fronting unequivocally country bands that more often than not focused attention on their singing. Maddox differed from the other two in her determination to make a full-time career in country music and in her willingness to step out of the demure country woman stereotype. Like the rockabilly women she undoubtedly influenced, Maddox threw herself into the spirit of the music and projected a strong image, all the while never overstepping the boundaries of sexual propriety or appearing morally decadent. Beyond their important contributions to woman's place in country music, the Maddox Brothers and Rose created incredibly invigorating and progressive music a decade ahead of its time. Fittingly, they appeared regularly at Marty Landau's Riverside Rancho, one of the West Coast's biggest dance halls, frequented by such dynamic performers as Tennessee Ernie Ford, Merle Travis, Tex

Williams, and others. The Rancho was a hedonistic paradise, frequented by barflies and migrants looking for escape from their daily worries. From their colorful costumes to their propulsive music, the Maddox Brothers and Rose gave Rancho patrons just what they wanted to see and hear and left an imprint on many young country musicians who transformed their music into the Bakersfield Sound.¹³

The Maddox family left central Alabama for California at the height of the depression, in March of 1933, in search of employment. Soon after their arrival, they joined the many migratory crop pickers in the fertile San Joaquin Valley working for paltry wages and moving with the crop seasons. Despite their poverty, the young Maddox brothers always found time to play music, carrying on a family tradition established back in the South. In 1937, Fred Maddox (eighteen at the time) grew tired of crop picking and approached a Modesto businessman about the possibility of sponsoring a country show featuring the family. The man agreed to the arrangement but stipulated that a female singer appear with the group. Though only eleven at the time, Rose Maddox took on the job, backed by her brothers Fred (on bass), Cal and Cliff (on guitar), and Don on fiddle; in time, Henry also joined the band on mandolin. While the radio offered a starting point, the brothers continued to work regular jobs during the daytime, augmenting their income by playing at rodeos on weekends and

¹³ Mary A. Bufwack, Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993) 156-163; Robert K. Oermann and Mary A. Bufwack, "Rockabilly Women," Journal of Country Music Vol. 8, No. 1 (May 1979): 65, 88; Hazel Meyer, The Gold In Tin Pan Alley (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958) 112-113; Jonny Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose: The Life and Career of Rose Maddox (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1997) 97.

barrooms at night. In 1939, the group won first prize in the country band competition at the Sacramento State Fair, a one-year contract with a Sacramento station that reached Arizona, Oregon, and Washington as well as all parts of California. The war halted the group's progress, but the brothers returned in 1945 with a fixed determination to make it in the music business. Mixing comedy with a versatile musical repertoire, the Maddox Brothers and Rose focused their attention on dancehall audiences' preferences for diversionary material. Rose Maddox points out the difference between the pre- and post-war outlook of the band: "Prior to the war we worked for tips, mostly. Then after the war we started getting paid for doing dances and stuff. So we had to change our style some, to really entertain." Taking a cue from western swing bands, the brothers plugged in their instruments and hired a lead guitarist (Jimmy Winkle) and a steel guitar player (Bud Duncan). Fred Rose explains the reasoning behind the decision to enlarge the band and amplify its instruments: "The louder you get, and the more power you put behind it, it puts it in the people's feet and in their bodies, see?...And it made us feel it when we played, and it made us do a show." With an eclectic mix of comedy, rhythm and blues covers, gospel, honky tonk, and traditional country favorites, the band's repertoire offered something for everyone. When they began dressing themselves in elaborate western costumes (a trademark that earned them the honor of "America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band") their popularity soared. Through their records for the Four Star label, their X-station radio transcriptions, and their exciting performances at clubs like the Riverside Rancho, the Maddox Brothers and Rose became a highly sought-after show band west

of the Mississippi. On the heels of the success of a gospel-tinged number entitled "Flowers for the Master's Bouquet," they made a guest appearance on the Grand Ole Opry in early 1949 and began touring extensively in the East. In the early fifties, they appeared on both the Hometown Jamboree and Town Hall Party television programs in California and joined the Louisiana Hayride. In 1953, they secured a major label contract with Columbia records and continued to ride the wave of their popularity before television and the rock phenomenon finally took a heavy toll of their audience. In the mid-fifties, Rose Maddox embarked on a part-time solo career, eventually quitting the band in 1956. Ultimately, the group disbanded in the late fifties, with Fred opening a successful nightclub and Rose continuing on with her solo career.¹⁴

While no sound recording could capture the full effect of the group's roadhouse performances, the Maddoxes' Four Star releases come remarkably close to capturing the full breadth of the band's eclecticism and musical repertoire. Tackling country, gospel, blues, boogies, western songs, and sentimental numbers, the Maddox Brothers and Rose approach every song with a confidence and enthusiasm that lends a listenable quality to nearly every one of their recordings. When they play it straight,

¹⁴ Bill C. Malone, Honky-Tonkin' (Alexandria: Time-Life Records, 1983) 3; Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose, 4-158; Rose Maddox quoted in Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 128; Fred Rose quoted in Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose, 58-59; Stephen R. Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night": a History of Louisiana Country Music, diss., Tulane University, 1995 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996) 480-481; Bufwack, Finding Her Voice, 124-129; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 8 (19 February 1949): 35; Daniel C. Cooper, "The Maddox Brothers," The All Music Guide to Country, eds. Michael Erlewine et al. (San Francisco: Miller Freeman Books, 1997) 287-288; Keith Oleson, liner notes, The Maddox Brothers and Rose, Vol. 1: "America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band", Arhoolie CD-391, 1993.

as they do on sentimental tunes like “Careless Driver” and on straightforward love songs like “Sunset Trail Waltz,” they sound like an old-time or western pop band, with subtle instrumentation and sincere singing. On faster numbers, however, the group comes alive with a kinetic energy and carefree spontaneity more indicative of its attitude and musical approach. As the band’s unofficial leader, Fred Rose kept things rolling along with his on-record wisecracks and enthusiastic bass playing. Neither Fred nor any of the other Maddox brothers possessed superlative playing abilities, but what they lacked in talent they more than made up for in self-assurance. Commenting on the group’s ability to overcome its limited musical skills, Fred Maddox sums up the brothers’ musical approach: “None of us could read music; we were not accomplished musicians. We didn’t do music this way, that way, or any other way. We just did what we felt and what came natural.”¹⁵

With Fred’s pounding, up-right bass, Henry’s loud, staccato amplified mandolin solos, Don’s uninhibited fiddling, and Cal’s energetic rhythm guitar and bluesy harmonica playing, the Maddox Brothers produced a sound unlike any other contemporary country band. While they often played with a speed akin to bluegrass, their use of amplifiers and steel guitar preclude a comparison with the alternative string band sound. Despite their heavy emphasis on bass rhythms and unbridled solos, their downplay of fiddle and steel guitar parts in favor of hot electric guitar runs places them beyond the scope of western swing and closer to rhythm and blues. Hiring seventeen year old Roy Nichols as lead guitarist in 1949, the band moved further away

¹⁵ Fred Rose quoted in Whiteside, Ramblin’ Rose, 130.

from country and closer to the western-blues hybrid. An early Fender Telecaster enthusiast, Nichols combined Eldon Shamblin bass runs and stinging chords with high-gain bursts in a way that portended both rockabilly and the Bakersfield Sound. Nichols' exciting work on "Water Baby Blues (Boogie)," "(New) Step It Up and Go," and "South," in particular, contributes greatly to the band's recognition as one of the most progressive country groups of the 1940s. Henry Maddox's high-volume electric mandolin solos on "Georgia's Playhouse Boogie" and "Mean and Wicked Boogie" gives the listener an idea of how he helped to keep audiences moving at the group's dancehall performances. "Shimmy Shakin' Daddy" and "Sally, Let Your Bangs Hang Down" offer prime examples of the Maddoxes' good-time emphasis, with lascivious lyrics and brawling instrumental solos. While Fred Maddox took the lead vocal on the group's more salacious numbers, Rose often joined in on choruses, or in the case of "Whoa Sailor," provided the female side of a story with the duet vocal. Rose Maddox proved quite capable of singing in a variety of musical settings. On "Honky Tonkin" and "Move it On Over" she sings primal honky tonk, while "Beautiful Bouquet" and "Forever Yours" (both from the group's tenure with Columbia Records) reveal her as a smooth pop singer. One of the most assertive female singers of the 1940s, Maddox could evoke disenchantment (i.e. "(Pay Me) Alimony Blues," "Eight Thirty Blues," and "Baby, You Should Live So Long") or aggressiveness (i.e. "It's Only Human Nature" and "I'll Make Sweet Love to You") in her portrayals of strong women. "I Can't Stop Loving You" indicates the country-pop direction she took upon embarking on a solo career in the mid-fifties. After signing with Columbia in 1952, the band (by

edict) became more inhibited. Fred Rose recalls the origins of the rocky relationship the group had with the major label: "Columbia didn't want us like we was...they wanted it a certain way, but Four Star wanted it like we had it. Still, they had the contract. There was nothin' we could do about it." While "No Help Wanted" showed signs of spontaneity, most of the Columbia recordings present the band playing more straightforward honky tonk or country-pop. In their kaleidoscopic prime, however, the Maddox Brothers and Rose disregarded all musical boundaries and conventions; in doing so, they created some of the most rousing country music of the postwar period.¹⁶

The creative freedom given to the Maddoxes by the independent Four Star label indicates a nationwide trend in the music industry of the late forties and early fifties. Generally, most majors frowned upon music that transgressed the parameters of what they viewed as a marketable product. Within the realms of country music, West Coast-based Capitol represented the only large record company willing to booster an eclectic musical form like country-blues. With western swing on the decline, the majors looked to country-pop and honky tonk for their big sellers in the country field. Even more so than postwar traditionalism, country-blues represented an aberrant musical form, viewed as a deviation from the direction country music seemed to be going. Despite receiving minimal support from the major labels, however, country-blues steadily attracted listeners to its vitality and liberal music message. With its lyrical emphasis on humor and intemperance, country-blues appealed to a minority group of country music listeners primarily located in urban areas

¹⁶ Fred Rose quoted in Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose, 136.

disenchanted with honky tonk's lyrical commiseration and mainstream country's increasing affiliation with conservative pop music.

As noted above, country-blues took several forms, with its California version evolving out of western swing and tending to emphasize dance music and escapist lyrics. With a large market of western swing devotees and dancehall patrons in California, Capitol sanctioned western blues with reasonable assurance that it would sell well on the booming West Coast. East of the Mississippi, postwar country-blues took on a different form, one rooted in African-American musical styles and rural lyrical imagery. Syd Nathan emerged as the biggest booster of country blues in the eastern United States after World War II, with his Cincinnati-based King label releasing a slew of records of this type. Upon incorporating King in 1944, Nathan focused on marketing a product attractive to urban southern migrants, both black and white. To this end, he sought out African American blues shouters like Roy Brown and Wynonie Harris as well as dynamic country acts like the Delmore Brothers and Moon Mullican. While Nathan maintained a roster of roots- and pop-orientated country performers, his greatest commercial success came with acts that favored an energetic approach. Like the other independents that arose after World War II, King records specialized in a musical style overlooked by the Big Six record labels. For Nathan, country-blues (a sub-genre frowned upon by conservatives in Nashville) provided an inroad on the market.¹⁷

¹⁷ Richard L. Gordon, "The Man Who is King," Saga 1951. Reprinted in John Edward Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 4, No. 10 (June 1968): 63-64; Ian Whitcomb,

After the domestication of country music in the mid-thirties, country-blues virtually disappeared, even as Jimmie Rodgers enthusiasts kept its spirit alive and Texas string bands continued to play the black and white blend. The nationalization of country music dealt another blow to country-blues, further encouraging the movement towards softer sounds manifest primarily in the country-pop fusion. Interest in blues music nationally, however, intensified during the war, bolstered by many of the factors contributing to country music's nationalization (the AFM ban, cultural integration, etc.) as well as the success of blues shouter Louis Jordan. After the war, independent labels gained a stronghold in the new rhythm and blues (r & b) market, with Nathan's King label scoring several of the biggest r & b hits of the late forties. Maintaining a hands-on approach (often to the chagrin of many of his contracted performers), Nathan spurred his country artists to pep up their arrangements and encouraged the cross-fertilization of white country and black blues. In hiring Henry Glover as producer in the late forties, Nathan procured a similarly-minded, yet less abrasive A & R man who fleshed out the King country-blues fusion with artists like Moon Mullican and the Delmore Brothers. Mullican and the Delmores, of course, were no strangers to the blues, but in Glover and Nathan they found industry executives seeking to reawaken interest in the passé country sub-genre. Largely through their success, King Records became the nucleus of the country-blues movement in the late forties and early fifties,

eventually eclipsing Capitol as purveyor of the sub-genre's biggest hits.¹⁸

The Delmore Brothers first established a relationship with Syd Nathan in World War II, during their tenure at Cincinnati's WLW. In January 1944, they recorded their first King sides before the duo separated after Rabon accepted a defense job. Near the end of the war, after WLW refused to rehire Rabon, the Delmores left the city, eventually landing in Memphis, where they began appearing regularly on WMC in 1945. They continued to record for King, developing the country-blues approach they established at Decca. One of the principal blues centers of the South, Memphis offered an environment conducive to the maturation of the Delmore's pre-war style. While in the area, they met Wayne Raney, a harmonica player from Arkansas whose approach to the instrument reflected his familiarity with and deep appreciation of African American blues styles. Raney immediately clicked with the Delmores and soon became a fixture on their radio shows and records. Recognizing the need to update their sound, the Delmore Brothers embraced amplified accompaniment and the boogie sound that surged in popularity during the war. As skilled guitarists, the two brothers had little difficulty adapting the piano-based sound to their instruments. Applying intricate harmonies, Raney's harmonica, and electric guitar to the up-tempo beat, the Delmore Brothers created some of the liveliest and most progressive country music of the postwar period, yet they still proved remarkably capable of playing slow blues as well as traditionally-based gospel (with the Browns

¹⁸ John W. Rumble, "Roots of Rock and Roll: Henry Glover at King Records," Journal of Country Music Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992): 33-36.

Ferry Four).¹⁹

In January 1946, the Delmores officially inaugurated their "boogie" period when they recorded "Hillbilly Boogie," an infectious, light-hearted number with an abundance of guitar bass runs and vocal exclamations. With lyrics that equate the urban honky tonk with a good time and the presence of Louis Innis' electric guitar, the song represents a conscious effort on the Delmores part to reach an urban audience. Several other songs from the session, however, point back to their rural, acoustic approach, with "She Left Me Standing On the Mountain" and "Midnight Train" indicating that the Delmores were not burning any musical bridges. The brothers continued this mix of rural/urban sounds and lyrical imagery in subsequent sessions, intermingling boogies and country laments. On faster numbers like "Boogie Woogie Baby," "Mobile Boogie," "Stop That Boogie," perfunctory lyrics take a back seat to exciting guitar and harmonica solos, but on slower numbers, the Delmores prove that they never lost their pre-war songwriting skills. "Waiting for That Train," "Somebody Else's Darling," and "Home in Dixie" reveal the true extent of their vocal and writing talents, though they continued to score their greatest commercial success with more lively novelty numbers. Raney's harmonica work gives nearly all of their King sides a blues element, lending a Delta feel to a reworking of "Happy on the Mississippi

¹⁹ Charles K. Wolfe, "Editor's Postscript," *Truth is Stranger Than Publicity*, by Alton Delmore (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1995) 286-288; Ian Whitcomb, *After the Ball*, 145; Cooper, *Lefty Frizzell*, 149; Kienzle, "Country Music Instruments and Players," 215.

Shore" adding authenticity to "Rounder's Blues." On the group's biggest hit, "Blues Stay Away From Me," the Delmores demonstrate their uncanny ability to marleize the country and blues traditions. Prompted by Syd Nathan, the two brothers wrote the song and worked out the arrangement with Henry Glover. Haunting harmony, acoustic and electric guitar interplay, and the twin-harmonica work of Wayne Raney and Lonnie Glosson all blend together in the creation of a deep, chugging blues with appropriately sullen lyrics. Interestingly, the Delmores moved closer to a mainstream approach after the success of "Blues Stay Away From Me" in 1949. A relocation to Texas and personal problems led to a series of difficulties for the Delmores in the early 1950s, with the brothers going their separate ways in 1951. Moving to Detroit, Rabon Delmore embarked on a solo career abruptly halted by a decline in his health. In early 1952, Alton moved north to join Rabon who soon discovered that he had cancer. On their last recordings before Rabon died later that year, the Delmores reaffirmed their songwriting, singing, and guitar-playing skills, with "That Old Train" and "The Trail of Time" ranking among some of their best work. With "I'll Be There" (from late 1951) and "I Needed You" (from their last session), the Delmores point the way for the soft, country-pop harmony popularized by the Everly Brothers in the mid-fifties. To the end, the Delmores maintained the standard of high quality and musical foresight they established in the early thirties. Working with Raney and King executives, they helped rejuvenate the dormant country-blues genre and reestablished the bond between black and white indigenous southern musical forms at a time when

country was moving closer to pop.²⁰

As King Records' other primary country-blues fusionist, Moon Mullican mixed the barrelhouse piano of the Texas piney woods with southwestern swing and contemporary r & b to forge a style that often trembled more vehemently than early rockabilly. One of country music's most irrepressible performers, Mullican played and sang with a fervor that lent emotional veracity to slower blues pieces and a combustible energy to up-tempo numbers. As a member of Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers and Bob Dunn's Vagabonds in the late thirties and early forties, Mullican injected a strong blues element into the Texas swing sound at a time when the jazz influence predominated in the idiom. As a solo artist on King Records in the postwar period, he continued to embrace African American blues, incorporating it with country-pop, western swing, and Cajun sounds. With his weathered voice and down-home piano playing, Mullican attracted older listeners disenchanted with sophisticated country offerings and a younger crowd that could not relate to honky tonky's broodishness. Never one to follow in the footsteps of others, Mullican consistently brushed aside country music conventions on the road to developing his own country-blues matrix.

Born in 1909, Aubrey "Moon" Mullican grew up on an eighty-acre farm in Polk County, Texas. Within the piney woods of east Texas, a region home to many

²⁰ Charles K. Wolfe, "The Delmore Brothers Discography," *Truth is Stranger Than Publicity*, by Alton Delmore (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1995) 306-318; Wolfe, "Editor's Postscript," 287-290, 292-295; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," *The Billboard* Vol. 65, No. 1 (3 January 1953): 28; Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits*, 93.

African Americans working for the lumber companies, a rich blues tradition thrived in the black juke joints and labor camps. As a child, Mullican first gained exposure to the blues from a black agricultural worker who taught him guitar. When he grew older, the impressionable teenager continued his musical education by stealing away on Saturday nights to hear his neighbors playing. Mullican may have liked the guitar, but he gravitated to the piano at an early age, most probably because of its volume. As a child he liked to play the family's pump organ at full blast, experimenting with blues chords in defiance of his father's preference for religious music. At age 16, Mullican left for Houston, where he began playing cafes and honky tonks for thirty-five cents a night. When Houston became a hotbed for western swing in the mid-thirties, Mullican joined the Blue Ridge Playboys before becoming a member of Cliff Bruner's outfit and Bob Dunn's studio band. Before the war, he made occasional appearances on the records of several notable acts, including the Sunshine Boys, Buddy Jones, and Jimmie Davis. Additionally, Mullican maintained his own band, the Night Riders. Somehow, in late 1941, he ended up in Chicago playing the bars with a member of his group and an otherwise all-black band. During the war, he toured with Cliff Bruner and campaigned with Jimmie Davis in the Southwest, before settling down momentarily in Port Arthur around 1945. After signing with King Records in 1946, he remained based in Texas, leasing a Beaumont club with Cliff Bruner in 1947 and opening his own nightspot in Hessmer, Louisiana in 1948. On the strength of several popular singles and with the help of his friend Hank Williams, he began a six-year affiliation with the Grand Ole Opry in 1949. In the late fifties, he recorded

several interesting rock numbers for the Decca label before returning to his country roots in the early sixties. He remained a dynamic live performer in the last years of his life before suffering a fatal heart attack in 1967.²¹

Moon Mullican's affiliation with the King label proved mutually beneficial. In Mullican, Syd Nathan found an artist capable of playing a variety of eclectic styles, from hard blues to ethnic dance numbers; additionally, Mullican could sing country-pop convincingly, making him commercially viable. Nathan never had to worry about Mullican's on-record energy, with the pianist always willing and able to spruce up even sedate numbers with lively rolls and trills. Hence, Mullican's most successful country-pop recordings ("Goodnight Irene," "Mona Lisa") feature sprightly piano work along with his smooth singing. Mullican also made the charts experimenting with Cajun ("New Pretty Blonde") and honky tonk music ("I'll Sail My Ship Alone"), but blues remained his forte throughout his stay at King. Recording in Texas during the first few years with the label, he dabbled in western swing on numbers like "I Left My Heart in Texas" and "What Have I Done That Made You Go Away" and tipped his hat to Jimmie Davis on "Columbus Stockade Blues" and "There's A Chill on the Hill Tonight," but his music remained firmly planted in the blues. "I'm Gonna Move Home Bye and Bye" stands as one of the most striking gospel/blues numbers of the

²¹ Gordon Baxter, "Pop Never Wanted Me to Be a Musician," Music City News Vol. 4, No. 8 (February 1967): 27; Rich Kienzle, liner notes, Seven Nights to Rock, Western LP 2001, 1982; Rich Kienzle, liner notes, Moon's Rock, Bear Family CD BCD 15607, 1992; Phillip J. Tricker, liner notes, Moonshine Jamboree, Ace/King CD CDCHD 458, 1993; Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 34 (21 August 1948): 31.

post war period, while "Wait a Minute" and the relentless "Don't Ever Take My Picture Down" demonstrate Mullican's mastery of urban blues. When Mullican started recording in Cincinnati on a semi-regular basis around 1950, he and Henry Glover devised an even more conspicuous r & b sound. Impressed by Mullican's mastery of the boogie-woogie piano technique and his uncanny apprehension of the blues, Glover encouraged him to follow his musical passion. Adding drums and horns and dropping the steel guitar and fiddle all together, Mullican and Glover dismiss the barriers of musical segregation and create straight r & b on several recordings of the period. With Syd Nathan sanctioning the musical integration of his King artists' songs, Mullican covers Tiny Bradshaw's "Well Oh Well" and Roy Brown's "Grandpa Stole My Baby." On the latter number, Mullican steps out of his restrained vocal approach and shouts the blues in deference to its composer's singing style. Other blues highlights include the playful "I Done It" and the stomping "Moonshine Blues." Like Bob Wills and the Delmore Brothers, Moon Mullican proved capable of creating an unadulterated version of African American blues that obfuscated the line between black and white musical forms.²²

With his incorporation of r & b instrumentation, Moon Mullican more clearly presaged rock and roll than any other contemporary country performer. Two principal factors, however, precluded Mullican's success as a rock performer: his age and his lack of popularity among radio disc jockeys. Mullican and other country-blues performers undoubtedly set the stage for rock with their integration of black and white

²² Rumble, "Roots of Rock and Roll," 30-38.

musical forms, but they did not fit the new genre's mold. Performers' success in the rock market depended on three separate but equally important criteria: the musical ability to mix country and urban blues; their appeal to an ever-expanding youth market; and the support of disc jockeys. All of the major country-blues performers of the postwar period discussed at length above possessed at least the first of these criteria, but none all three. Mullican and Ford probably had the best chance, but Ford chose pop music and Mullican failed to click with country disc jockeys; additionally, neither connected with teenagers. In order to understand rock's ascendance, one needs to keep in mind the social and business climate in which it matured. Country-blues artists of the late forties and early fifties furnished rock with its musical body, but urban teenagers and radio disc jockeys provided the spirit that gave it life.²³

Prior to the hey-day of the radio disc jockey (DJ) in the late forties and early fifties, live performers and recorded transcriptions provided the bulk of music played on the radio. The history of the DJ dates back to early 1932, when Al Jarvis of Los Angeles' KFVB inaugurated a program called the Make Believe Ballroom, on which he played records to fill airtime. Within a couple of years, Martin Block in New York developed a similar show. At the time, record companies frowned on the practice, seeing it as encroaching on their sales. As Jarvis recalls, "whenever an announcer would spin a disk, he'd humbly apologize for doing so." In 1940, the disc jockeys received a legal boost from the Supreme Court. The era of the country DJ began soon

²³ "Favorite Country and Western Artists," The Billboard, Vol. 63, No. 37 (15 September 1951): 62; "Favorite Country and Western Artists," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 9 (28 February 1953): 60.

thereafter, with Randy Blake's Suppertime Frolic over WJJD in Chicago and Foreman Phillips' Western Hit Parade and Friday Night Merry Go Round) on KRKD, Los Angeles) emerging as important disc spinning shows in the early forties. During the war, disc jockeys gained wider acceptance, most likely because of the lack of available live talent at the time. In the South, Hal Horton's Hillbilly Hit Parade (broadcast over KRLD, Dallas) debuted around 1945 and soon became one of the most popular country DJ shows in the region, setting the stage for the postwar surge.²⁴

In the decade after World War II, disc jockeys' popularity seemed to grow exponentially with every new year. When the FCC granted licenses to hundreds of new independent stations after the war, disc jockeys stepped in to fill airtime in the absence of network programming. Country record spinners usually broadcast in the early morning or noontime hours, but the most popular of all country disc jockeys, Nelson King, broadcast at night. King's Jamboree heard from eight p.m. to midnight nightly over Cincinnati's WCKY quickly emerged as the major country record program in the late forties, with King regularly named the "Favorite Folk Disc Jockey" by Billboard. Unlike many other popular country DJs who concentrated on

²⁴ Al Jarvis, "Spotlight on Turntables: The Disc Jockey," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 17 (25 April 1953): 39; Peter Fornatle and Joshua E. Mills, The Radio in the Television Age (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1980) 12-13; Martin Block, "Disc Jockey in Key Music Biz Spot," Variety Vol. 157, No. 4 (3 January 1945): 135, 155; Hugh Cherry, "Country DJs Carry Music to the People," Music City News Vol. 18, No. 4 (October 1980): 18; Foreman Phillips, letter, The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 1942): 13-14; Gerald F. Vaughn, "Foreman Phillips: Western Swing's Kingmaker," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 53 (Spring 1979): 27-28; Hillbilly Hit Parade, advertisement, The Billboard Vol. 57, No. 26 (30 June 1945): 19; Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night", 400.

humor (e.g., Tennessee Ernie Ford), King offered listeners information about artists and songs, much as Randy Blake did in Chicago. Consequently, King and Blake attracted listeners who took the music seriously, building up an audience of jukebox operators and record industry executives as well as country music fans. Bob McCluskey, head of RCA-Victor's division of country and western promotion in the late forties and early fifties, comments on the significance of the show: "Nelson's program really controlled that whole section of the country late at night. The people that listened to the station were very, very record conscious at that time because what was played, they bought." Downplaying his influence, King maintained that he based his decision on whether or not to keep playing a record on letters from listeners. Whether they acted as a conduit for audience preferences or actually influenced listeners' tastes, country disc jockeys became the most important promoters of the latest releases, and record companies and artists soon found it to their advantage to curry their favor.²⁵

²⁵ Cherry, "Country DJs Carry Music to the People," 18-19; "Special Disc Jockey Supplement," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 40 (2 October 1948): 74-76; Colin Escott, Hank Williams, The Biography (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1994) 87; Bob McCluskey quoted in Michael Streissguth, Eddy Arnold, Pioneer of the Nashville Sound (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997) 118; "Favorite Folk Disc Jockey," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 43 (22 October 1949): 101; "Favorite Folk Disc Jockeys," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 40 (7 October 1950): 31; "Nelson King Repeats Past Wins as Jockey's Favorite Spinner," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 9 (28 February 1953): 62; "C and W Disk Jockeys...Favorites," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 46 (13 November 1954): 78; Nelson King, "Billboard Charts: A Prime Source for Programming," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 9 (28 February 1953): 44; Russell Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven: The American Popular Music Business in the Twentieth Century Revised edition (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996) 217-218.

In 1949, Billboard approximated 450 active country disc jockeys; among the most popular included the aforementioned King and Blake, as well as Johnny Hicks (in Dallas), Don Davis (in Cincinnati), Paul Kallinger (on border station XERF), and Biff Collie (in Houston). Two years later, the trade magazine reported the broadcast of over 1,400 country music disc jockey shows with the accompanying comment: "While the disc jockey is a paramount promotion force in any brand of the music business, nowhere is he more important to the field than in the case of country and western music." The rise of disc jockeys as promoters of personal appearances and recordings signaled the beginning of a new era in country music, one characterized by the importance of hit records as a direct source of income and vehicle for increasing personal appearance revenues. Accompanying this development, the age of live radio soon came to an end. Increasingly, DJ shows supplanted live programs; by 1954, stations were devoting over half their airtime to the former and less than ten percent to the latter. As country music historian Wayne W. Daniel points out, "the role of radio in the dissemination of country music was changing in the early 1950s from that of purveyor of live music to that of promoter of recorded music." Given this development, country music performers could ill-afford to ignore the power of the disc jockeys. Many continued to concentrate their efforts on lucrative tours, but the future of the genre was in the hands of the DJs, and those slow to recognize this development soon fell by the wayside.²⁶

²⁶ Johnny Sippel, "Rustic Rhythms Reaps \$\$ Reward," The Billboard Vol. 61, No. 43 (22 October 1949): 97; Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, Border Radio (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987) 171; Johnny Sippel, "The Hillbilly DeeJay, Prime Asset to

With their direct contact with listeners, country music disc jockeys both discerned and shaped audience tastes. While major record companies concentrated on marketing product with mass appeal, disc jockeys (like the independent record labels) focused on local and regional preferences. In large, urban areas, an audience of younger listeners began to hold sway, increasingly requesting that disc jockeys play songs applicable to their lives and musical tastes. With television becoming a home for conservative adult country music, radio emerged as its more adventurous, youth-orientated counterpart. The barn dances of the postwar decade varied in the types of country music they featured, but as a rule, most remained moderate in musical scope and character. While many popular country music disc jockeys maintained a restrained approach to their work, a group of more animated radio personalities emerged that played the more adventurous styles of music that younger listeners craved. In 1947, Ray Bartlett arrived at KWKH and soon amassed a loyal following with his Groovie's Boogie program that featured rhythm and blues records and his own jive talking between discs. In the early fifties, Dewey Phillips spun r & b discs over Memphis' WHBQ nightly, drawing young white listeners in with his charisma and eclectic musical selections. In 1954, Phillips introduced his listeners to Elvis Presley, a country-blues performer with a personality and sound that entranced urban teenagers in search of an identifiable symbol for their generation. Together, Phillips

Country & Western Music," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 37 (15 September 1951): 61; "Airtime," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 46 (13 November 1954): 34; Wayne W. Daniel, Pickin' On Peachtree: A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990) 206.

and Presley represented the grass-roots movement towards the more youth-accommodating music of the mid-fifties known as rockabilly. The popularity of disc jockeys like Phillips and performers like Presley took many by surprise; in retrospect, however, their success appears as an inevitability, a product of musical and socio-cultural developments of the post-war decade.²⁷

In terms of its musical lineage in country, one can trace rockabilly directly back to Texas swing of the 1930s, honky tonk of the late 1940s, and country-blues of the early 1950s. The heavy bass sound and electric instrumentation pioneered by western swing bands provided its instrumental make-up, while the percussive guitar effects and thud of honky tonk furnished its incessant, heavy beat. Presley and the rockabillys took the process one step further, discarding the steel guitar and fiddle in favor of more emphasis on lead guitar work and a thumbing rhythm. Several country songs of the 1940s by artists such as Bob Wills, Moon Mullican, the Maddoxes, Hank Williams and others predate the rockabilly sound, but Presley's recordings possess a novel, almost unidentifiable quality that pushed country music in an entirely new direction. Combining urban attitude with rural earthiness, rockabilly disdains the sophistication of country-pop and the rumination of honky tonk. As country-blues intended for young urbanites, rockabilly disavowed middle class respectability in

²⁷ Neil V. Rosenberg, Bluegrass: A History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) 96-97; Hazel Meyer, The Gold In Tin Pan Alley (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958) 130-134; Whitcomb, After the Ball, 217; Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night", 428; Peter Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley (London: Abacus, 1994) 4, 38, 96-97.

favor or primal debauchery. In doing so, it reached a generation of Americans coming of age in the post-war era.

In addition to dramatically altering the lives of America's adult population, World War II had a profound impact on the nation's youths. Just as it opened up employment opportunities for women, so too it brought "youngsters" into the labor force, with the number of employed teenagers rising by two million during the war. With fathers away and many mothers working, American teens discovered an independence that fostered the development of a rudimentary "youth culture." Some young men began wearing "zoot suits" and hanging around jukeboxes, while many young women termed "bobby-soxers" read fashion magazines and listened to Frank Sinatra. Gradually, American youths developed their own language, value system, fashion-sense, and taste in music. In the mid-late forties, postwar prosperity and a tenuous Atomic Peace accelerated the independent youth movement, as did the rise of fragmented families. With less parental supervision and more money, young Americans created their own self-sustaining culture, one that eventually reached full maturity with the help of American business, which supplied the new consumers with the clothing, print material, and music that lent incarnation to the uninhibited youth spirit.²⁸

²⁸ Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life (New York: Free Press, 1988) 166-175, 199-200; H. F. Mooney, "Popular Music Since the 1920s: The Significance of Changing Taste," American Quarterly Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 1968): 75.

In the postwar decade, youth culture went from an underground fad to a nationwide phenomenon, thanks in large part to the baby boom that occurred during World War II. Between 1941 and 1945, the American population increased by 6.5 million, with 1943 witnessing the highest birthrate in twenty years. Wartime children grew up surrounded by music. During the war, the jukebox craze reawakened adult's interest in records, and with postwar affluence the number of home record players doubled between 1945 and 1950. The sale of children's records rose steadily during the period, with the success of albums like Tex Ritter's Children's Songs and Stories prompting major labels to release similar selections. By 1948, children's discs accounted for fourteen percent of all record sales. With the introduction of the lighter, more durable 45 rpm record in the late forties, "Kidisk" sales figures soared as did the number of "kiddie players" (an estimated six million sold in 1950 alone). A 1949 survey conducted by American Girl magazine (published by the Girl Scouts of America) indicated that over two-thirds of junior high-school girls had record players, with nearly one-half buying records with their own money. Commenting on the report, Billboard astutely asked: "How many (record) dealers are keeping in close touch with this age group as a disk market?" As it turns out, the major record companies that supplied record dealers with musical discs had no trouble in satisfying the tastes of children, but they proved astonishingly nescient in their discernment of what these young listeners wanted to hear once they reached adolescence.²⁹

²⁹ Mintz, Domestic Revolutions, 154; Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven, 246, 318; "No Junking of Jukes," The Billboard Vol. 55, No. 39 (25 September 1943): 166; "American Folk Tunes," The Billboard Vol. 58, No. 30 (27 July 1946): 128;

With substantial purchasing power and a keen interest in music as a vehicle for defining themselves, urban teenagers stood on the verge of revolutionizing the American radio and record industries in the late forties and early fifties. As older listeners turned to adult-orientated television, their younger counterparts began to exert more influence on radio programming. Unimpressed with the saccharine offerings of American popular music, they sought out more lively, rhythm-orientated music with honest, straightforward lyrics. Just as many adult Americans found the realism of country music appealing, urban adolescents gravitated toward the emotional wallop of rhythm and blues. With its brashness, danceability, and novelty, r & b offered American youths what they were looking for; additionally, their parents' detest for the music carried an added bonus. While they could not call the music of urban blacks their own, they could at least regard it as their own discovery. In the evening hours, they tuned to r & b radio programs, initially heard exclusively on stations ministering to the tastes of urban African-Americans, but eventually broadcast by white disc jockeys as well. Dewey Phillips represented one of many white DJs with r & b shows in large southern urban areas, but the most famous of them all, Alan Freed, resided in the North. Awakened to white teenagers' interest in rhythm and blues by a Cleveland record storeowner in the early 1950s, Freed contrived a show featuring "rock and roll," originally defined as black music that disc jockeys played

"Development of Kidisk Market," The Billboard Vol. 63, No. 28 (14 July 1951): 79; Tony Wilson and Jerry Wexler, "Specialized Disk Sales Advance," The Billboard Vol. 60, No. 25 (19 June 1948): 20; "Dealer Doings," The Billboard Vol. 62, No. 2 (14 January 1950): 30.

for white listeners. In March of 1952, he staged the "Moon Dog Coronation Ball," an r & b show at Cleveland Arena that drew nearly 25,000 patrons, as many as one-third of them white. A similar non-Freed affair in Knoxville featuring Bull Moose Jackson (a King r & b artist) attracted 700 whites to a segregated event. In tapping into the rhythm and blues fad among young, urban whites, disc jockeys like Freed and Phillips desegregated American radio and exposed underground black music to a white national audience.³⁰

Young whites not only listened to r & b on radio and jukeboxes, but on their record players as well. In 1953, sales of rhythm and blues discs reached an all-time high of \$15 million, with teenagers spearheading the dramatic increase. In Los Angeles, a record store attributed more than forty percent of its r & b sales to whites. Latching on to the trend, dealers in predominantly white neighborhoods began stocking the latest releases from Ruth Brown, Big Joe Turner, and Wynonie Harris. Undoubtedly taken aback by the phenomenon and reluctant to cross the racial barrier, the major labels approached the idea of signing rhythm and blues artists tentatively, but they began to flirt with the notion of having white artists cover some of their songs. In the country field, Johnnie and Jack achieved the greatest success with this approach before 1955. In the pop field, an unknown singer named Bill Haley scored

³⁰ Fornatale, *Radio in the Television Age*, 15, 37-38; "Lowdown on Bands: Teen-Agers Give Out Frank Opinions," *The Billboard* Vol. 63, No. 16 (21 April 1951): 24; Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1970) 15-19, 32; George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 319-320; Bob Rolontz and Joel Friedman, "Teen-Agers Demand Music With a Beat, Spur Rhythm-Blues," *The Billboard* Vol. 66, No. 17 (24 April 1954): 1, 18, 24.

major hits with lyrically sanitized, but no less musically invigorating versions of such r & b hits as "Rock the Joint" and "Shake, Rattle, and Roll." Haley was initially lukewarm to the idea of covering r & b material when he recorded Jackie Brenston's "Rocket 88" in early 1951. Encouraged by an independent label owner named Dave Miller and the enthusiastic response he received from audiences, he soon discovered a career in covering material by black songwriters. Haley explains the circumstances that contributed to his success and the musical approach he developed:

Around the early fifties the musical world was starved for something new...the days of the solo vocalist and the big bands was gone...I felt that if I could take, say, a Dixieland tune and drop the first and third beats, and accentuate the second and forth, and add a beat the listeners could clap to as well as dance this would be what they were after.

Music historian Charlie Gillett terms Haley's saxophone driven, tightly-arranged approach "northern rock and roll," in contrast to its spontaneous, emotionally-charged southern counterpart (rockabilly). In 1954 the question remained, however, whether a white southern singer would be as willing to embrace rhythm and blues as Haley did. In addition to the racial taboo surrounding such a move, the probabilities of commercial success appeared minimal. Many white southern teenagers knew rhythm and blues, however, and northern adolescents had no patent on alienation and teen culture. Somewhere along the line, a young singer raised in the South was bound to try his hand at creating a southern version of rock and roll. His identity, the form his

music would take, and the record company that would be brave enough to record him remained in doubt.³¹

In the early-mid fifties, Memphis, Tennessee appeared as one of the more likely cities for the country rhythm and blues fusion to take place. With its substantial black population, it supported r & b radio programming and a burgeoning independent blues label (Sun Records). Additionally, many considered it a "progressive" southern city, one of the few southern urban areas to allow black voting in the era of African American disfranchisement and home to an omnipotent political machine (led by Edward H. "Boss" Crump) that promoted efficiency in government. In the late forties and early fifties, country filled the airwaves on local stations like WMPS and WMC, while predominantly black-orientated stations like WDIA broadcast blues music. A list of the most popular radio personalities of Memphis radio during the period includes Eddie Hill, Bob Neal, Dewey Phillips and B. B. King. Recording in the city dates back to a Ralph Peer field effort in the early 1950s. In the forties, country and blues artists traveled to other locations to record or used local radio stations if they recorded in Memphis at all. In early 1950, a white man from Florence, Alabama named Sam Phillips opened the doors to the Memphis Recording Service with the intent of recording artists in the area. Living in close proximity to blacks on his

³¹ Rolontz and Friedman, "Teen-Agers Demand Music With a Beat, Spur Rhythm-Blues," 1, 18; Lipsitz, Rainbow at Midnight, 319; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 246-247; Steve Schnickel, "R & B Music Invades Pop Market: Jukes, Disk Stores Feeling Trend," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 33 (14 August 1954): 13; Chris Gardner, liner notes, Rockin' Rollin' Bill Haley Bear Family LP BFX 15068, 1981; Bill Haley quoted in Gillett, The Sound of the City, 34; Gillett, The Sound of the City, 41.

family's large farm in Alabama, Phillips grew up with African-American blues and gospel music; having lived in Memphis since 1945, he was well aware of the city's rich blues tradition. In the early 1950s, he recorded several notable r & b artists in the area, including B. B. King, Little Milton, Howlin' Wolf, and Ike Turner. Initially, he leased out his product to independent distributors, but eventually mustered up the confidence to begin his own label in the spring of 1952. Like other "indies" such as Modern, Chess, and King, Phillips' Sun Records concentrated on rhythm and blues material directed at African Americans who migrated to urban areas during and after World War II. While majors dominated the national market (releasing over ninety-seven percent of all million-selling records in the first seven years after the war), the product of the independent labels sold steadily in areas around their home bases. Given a boost by the discovery of magnetic tape (which made recording more economical), another AFM strike in 1948, and the majors' concentration on established artists, the independents reaped a harvest of young talent performing alternative music (i.e. "bluegrass," jazz, and rhythm and blues). In the country field, King and Imperial were the only independents that steadily produced hit records, largely due to their signing of artists like Moon Mullican, the Delmore Brothers, and Slim Whitman. Phillips occasionally recorded country artists as well, always with an ear for new talent and a novel sound. The entrepreneur recalls his artistic and business intent:

My main interest even at the outset was in developing something of a combination of black blues and country music. Besides, Nashville was doing a

damn good job on country stuff...In the early part of the fifties, I mainly concentrated on the blues, but I always would spend time with a country artist or two if they had any potential.

In the recusant Phillips, the first element of the country/rhythm and blues hybrid fell into place, with Sun Records and Memphis, Tennessee furnishing the fertile ground for the music to pullulate.³²

Sometime in 1953, Phillips met Elvis Presley, a young singer with an appreciation of several types of music and a penchant for flamboyant attire. Born in Mississippi to working class parents in 1935, Presley moved with his family to Memphis around 1948. As a youngster growing up around Tupelo, Presley acquainted himself with both black and white southern folk music. At age eleven, he acquired his first guitar, receiving instruction from his uncle and a local pastor. When his family moved to Memphis, the adolescent gained exposure to rhythm and blues, gospel, contemporary country, and pop music via the family radio. When he began singing in

³² Roger Biles, "Mempis," Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 1460; Colin Escott, The Sun Country Years: Country Music in Memphis, 1950-1959 (Bremen: Bear Family Records, 1986) 10-13, 21-27; Colin Escott, B.B. King: King of the Blues (Universal City: MCA Records, 1992) 7-10; James Austin, liner notes, The Sun Story, Rhino LP 71103, 1986; Robert Palmer, "Get Rhythm: Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and the Rockabilies" Country: The Music and the Musicians, 287-294; Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis, 328-331; Martin Hawkins, "Bulleit Records: A Shot in the Dark," Journal of Country Music Vol. 8, No. 3 (1981): 34; Richard Spottswood, "Country Music and the Phonograph," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 21, No. 8 (February 1987): 20-21; Cooper, Lefty Frizzell, 50; Fornatale, Radio in the Television Age, 40; Sam Phillips quoted in Escott, The Sun Country Years, 18-19; "Indies Move Up in C & W Field," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 8 (20 February 1954): 17; Joe Martin, "Status Quo in R & B: Years Been Good to Talent, Indies, Some Majors Subside," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 17 (24 April 1954): 13.

public as a teenager, his vocal style reflected the influence of a variety of artists, including Red Foley, Dean Martin, as well as evidencing touches of the Blackwood Brothers (a white gospel quartet) and the Ink Spots (a rhythm and blues group). While he enjoyed participating in a gospel singing program at the city's Ellis Auditorium, he also liked to spend time at a local record store listening to anything and everything the owner had in stock. As a teenager, he began to set himself apart from his peers through his clothing, hairstyle, and general deportment. Shopping at a black clothing store in the downtown area, he began to don bold, colorful clothing; while attending high school, the guitar he carried around and the ducktail he wore also caused him to stand out. After graduating from high school, he took a job driving a truck for Crown Electric. Harboring dreams of becoming a singer, he passed by Phillips' studio frequently. One day he worked up the nerve to walk in and introduce himself and in late 1953/early 1954, he made several acetates, accompanying his high-register, tentative singing with his own guitar playing. Phillips sensed the talent, but gave no indication of recording the singer until he came up with the idea of teaming him with a country band on his label, the Starlight Wranglers, led by guitarist Scotty Moore.³³

A native of west Tennessee, Scotty Moore received his first guitar at the age of eight, learning the basics from his father and older brother who played in a country group. Quitting high school, he joined the navy, where he gained considerable exposure to jazz music, with artists like Tal Farlow and Barney Kessel peaking his interest. Returning to west Tennessee in 1952, Moore found himself playing country

³³ Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis, 6-91.

music in the honky tonks in and around Memphis, patterning his style on Merle Travis and Chet Atkins, two of the genre's more adventurous artists. With bass player Bill Black and singer Doug Poindexter, Moore's Starlight Wranglers developed a following, with their leader eventually convincing Sam Phillips to take a chance on recording the group in June of 1954. Despite unimpressive sales, Phillips maintained contact with the guitarist, sensing a synergic potential in the relationship. As Moore explains: "(Sam Phillips) knew there was a crossover coming. He foresaw it... We were all looking for something, we didn't know quite what it was, just some way to get through the door." Remembering Presley, Phillips urged Moore to get together with the young singer to help determine his potential. Showing up at Moore's doorstep in a pink suit and white shoes, Presley took Moore slightly off guard: "From the beginning, I could see that he had a different outlook on things, just the way he dressed, the way he wore his hair. He was a rebel, really, without making an issue out of it." Overcoming a tawdry first impression, Presley roused enough of the guitarist's interest to earn another audition with Phillips, destined to take place on July 5, 1954.³⁴

Country music entered a new era when Elvis Presley, Scotty Moore, and Bill Black gathered at Phillips' Sun studio in the summer of 1954. At that point in time, country music was predominantly conservative, adult-orientated music. Well on its way to taming the honky tonkers, the Nashville recording industry and the Grand Ole Opry were systematically promoting a product that appealed to older, middle-class

³⁴ Peter Guralnick, Lost Highway: Journeys and Arrivals of American Musicians (Boston: D. R. Godine, 1979) 96-100; Scotty Moore quoted in Guralnick, Lost Highway, 99, 101.

listeners as well as members of the southern working class. Besieged by television and the retirement of its principal performers, insurgent western swing no longer presented a threat to mainstream country music. Underground movements, like country-blues and postwar traditionalism, continued to thrive in pockets of the southeast, but country-pop and honky tonk ruled the roost. The influence of country music's mavericks (located mainly on the West Coast and in Texas) waned as the industry moved to create a homogenized product designed for national consumption. In its push for national acceptance, however, country music overlooked its younger listeners and the quiet revolution taking place in urban areas across the nation. In search of their own distinct identity, many southern youths turned away from the country music their parents listened to and discovered rhythm and blues as an alternative. As Sam Phillips explains, however, they often approached the music with a certain degree of ambivalence: "These records appealed to white youngsters...but there was something in many of (them) that resisted buying this music...They liked the music, but they weren't sure whether they ought to like it or not." Phillips realized that by applying r & b's energy and attitude to the country-blues matrix established by the West Coast and King artists, he could produce a hybrid that offered younger southerners musical gratification without racial guilt. Presley's age, look, and demeanor all distinguished him from preceding country-blues artists. Additionally, his voice knew no constraints; he had no qualms about shouting the blues and absorbing himself completely into the energy of the music. Combining r & b sensuality, gospel emotion, country earthiness, and youthful angst, Elvis Presley

offered adolescents the same sense of commonality that pre-war listeners found in the schoolhouses and postwar migrants sought in the honky tonks. Just as members of the nouveau bourgeoisie in the urban South viewed country-pop as their music, their sons and daughters looked upon rockabilly as the most accurate expression of their worldview.³⁵

Understanding the void in country music opened up by the emergence of youth culture helps to explain the circumstances surrounding Elvis Presley's rise, but fails to capture the reasons for his astonishing appeal. It all started with the music. Presley's first recordings with Moore and Black seem innocuous enough; they include a cover of a slow pop song ("Harbor Lights") as well as a rendition of Leon Payne's country classic, "I Love You Because." With "That's All Right, Mama," however, the group moves in a completely different direction. With Bill Black frenetically slapping the bass and Scotty Moore chiming in with Merle Travis- and Chet Atkins-like licks, Elvis Presley throws himself into an accelerated version of the Arthur Crudup r & b hit. At the center of the group's sound, Presley's acoustic guitar playing gives him the reins with the song's pace, providing him with the freedom to unleash as much energy as he desires. For Scotty Moore, the experience proved liberating as well:

This was the first opportunity, without my really knowing it, that I had to really mix it all up. I mean, it wasn't a planned thing. But I loved blues and I

³⁵ Sam Phillips quoted in Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis, 96; James C. Cobb, The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity (New York: Oxford Press, 1992) 303; Patrick Mullen, "Hillbilly Hipsters of the 1950s: The Romance of Rockabilly," Southern Quarterly Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1984): 79.

loved country...and with the few instruments we had, you just did everything you could to make it sound bigger, you know.

For Moore, this meant inserting fingerpicking runs around Presley's vocals and stepping forward with percussive, chord-driven solos. Continually urged by Phillips to keep his jazzy finger rolls to a minimum, Moore increasingly directs his attention to rhythm. On "Good Rockin' Tonight," he sets the standard for all subsequent rockabilly guitarists with a chord progression and walking bass line that defies passive listening. Bill Black contributes to the overall effect of the song with relentless, freewheeling slaps to the upright bass that lend a carefree air to the number. Presley's singing, meanwhile, demonstrates his affinity for blues shouters' and gospel singers' emotional surrender to a song's sentiments. On "Milkcow Blues Boogie," the group completes their musical coup d'état with a complete redefinition of the country blues and boogie idioms. Symbolically, the song starts out slow and bluesy, like earlier western swing versions, before Presley steps back to challenge his bandmates (and his listeners) to take an adventurous musical ride. Presley's use of the falsetto, his exclamations during Moore's solo, and his overall enthusiasm pushes the arrangement to the point of spontaneous combustion, running rough-shod over all diffidence and musical orthodoxy. When the group slows things down a bit on "You're a Heartbreaker" and "I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone," Presley demonstrates just how well he can sing, but Phillips judiciously chose to promote faster numbers,

knowing full well that they would click with younger listeners.³⁶

Armed with the initial pressings of “That’s All Right, Mama”/“Blue Moon of Kentucky,” Sam Phillips began to solicit Presley’s recordings to local and regional disc jockeys. As Scotty Moore recalls, Phillips and the group knew they faced a challenge in gaining acceptance for their music: “We thought it was exciting, but what was it? It was just so completely different. But it just really flipped Sam—he felt it really had something. We just sort of shook our heads and said, ‘Well, that’s fine, but good God, they’ll run us out of town.” When Dewey Phillips played the song on his Red, Hot, and Blues radio program, it drew immediate and positive reaction among younger listeners. By the time of its release, Sam Phillips had 5,000 back orders for the single; eventually, in September 1954, it reached the number one position on the Memphis charts. Over the course of the summer, the band played several local appearances, first at honky tonks but increasingly at places where younger listeners could attend (i.e., schools, parks, etc.). As Moore recollects, the band began to realize the extent of Presley’s popularity among younger listeners when they played at a local shopping center: “This was the first we could see what was happening. ‘Cause it was a whole parking lot full of kids, and they just went crazy.” While the music certainly helped brew enthusiasm, Presley’s stage presence bowled over adolescent listeners more than anything else. With their onstage trembles, Hank Williams and Lefty

³⁶ Scotty Moore quoted in Dan Forte, “Roots of Rockabilly, Country Musicians: From the Editors of Guitar Player, Keyboard, and Frets Magazines, ed. Judie Eremo (Cupertino: Grove Press, 1987) 100; Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis, 92-104; Palmer, “Get Rhythm,” 302-308.

Frizzell furnished Presley with a performance model, but the young man from Tupelo took physical interpretation of the music to a new level, with gyrations that exuded as much sexuality as they did ardent enthusiasm. Presley's mannerisms, hip garb, and unchained passion for the music differentiated him from previous country-blues singers, and attracted younger audience members who found in him release from conventional restraints. Many other country music listeners (both young and old) with tastes for established styles failed to see the allure of Presley's music. In hindsight, Presley's cool reception at the Grand Ole Opry on October 2, 1954 seems a foregone conclusion; after all, he was moving in a direction diametrically opposed to Nashville's conservative inclinations. The more adventurous Louisiana Hayride accepted Presley's individual style and provided the singer with a promotional base until early 1956. Signing Bob Neal as his manager in early 1955, Presley continued a tour of the South begun in the latter part of 1954. Working with Tom Parker, Neal also placed Presley on a package show tour with headliner Hank Snow. Presley's performances garnered ecstatic responses from younger audience members, much to Snow's astonishment: "I was truly amazed at the reaction Elvis received after his first performance on stage. The crowd went wild. For a completely unknown artist to capture an audience in this manner was unbelievable." After signing with RCA-Victor and Parker in late 1955, of course, Presley became a national sensation, turning American culture topsy-turvy. Country music, meanwhile, dealt with the immediate implications of Presley's rise, namely

the onset of rockabilly.³⁷

In the mid-fifties, Memphis, Tennessee and Sun Records became the nucleus of the rockabilly movement. As Scotty Moore explains, Presley's success vindicated the music that many young country artists were already playing in the honky tonks:

When Elvis busted through, it enabled all these other groups that had been going along more or less the same avenue—I'm sure there were hundreds of them—to tighten up and focus on what was going to be popular. If they had a steel guitar, they dropped it. The weepers and slow country ballads pretty much went out of their repertoire. And what you had left was country-orientated boogie music.

Defined by Carl Perkins as "a country man's song with a black man's rhythm," "rockabilly" focuses on emotionally charged singing and lead guitar playing in the absence of familiar country instrumentation. Played primarily by young white southerners, the music stresses spontaneity and rhythmic drive while the lyrics often recall western swing's hedonism. In the hands of pioneers like Sidney "Hardrock"

³⁷ Scotty Moore quoted in Peter Guralnick, Elvis, the King of Rock 'n' Roll: The Complete 50's Masters (New York: BMG Music, 1992) n.p.; "C and W Territorial Best Sellers—Memphis," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 37 (11 September 1954): 54; Scotty Moore quoted in Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis, 124; Guralnick, Last Train to Memphis, 97-184; Guralnick, Lost Highway, 102, 127-128; Bill C. Malone, "Elvis, Country Music, and the South," All That Glitters: Country Music in America, ed. George H. Lewis (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1993) 55; Robert Hilburn, "Hail to the Real King," Los Angeles Times 9 May 1993; Bill C. Malone, "Growing Up With Texas Country Music," What's Going On? (In Texas Folklore), ed. Francis Edward Abernathy (Austin: Encino Press, 1976) 252; Tucker, "Louisiana Saturday Night", 482-491; Hank Snow, The Hank Snow Story (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 384.

Gunter and Carl Perkins, rockabilly offers a vehicle for a variety of alternative musical expressions. Gunter emphasized the music's urban roots in Alabama boogie and was among the first to record an r & b hit (with a 1951 cover of the Dominos' blockbuster "Sixty Minute Man"). Perkins' music, meanwhile, nearly always bore a folk stamp. Taught guitar by a black sharecropper near his family's home in northwestern Tennessee, Perkins mixed rural African American blues with the country music he heard on the Grand Ole Opry. After he formed his own band and began performing in honky tonks, he learned to add more edge to his playing, but he always managed to keep one foot firmly planted in the music of his youth. On his first recordings from late 1954, he introduces himself in a variety of musical settings, playing a honky tonk number, ("Honky Tonk Girl"), a country waltz ("Turn Around") and definitive rockabilly ("Gone Gone Gone"). No matter the musical approach, Perkins' singing and songwriting never strayed from country. In addition to attracting Gunter and Perkins, Sun Records also served as Johnny Cash's first record label. Cash grew up on the other side of the Mississippi River, in Arkansas, eventually moving to Memphis in 1954 after his discharge from the Air Force. Later that year, he auditioned for Sam Phillips backed by two auto mechanics named Luther Perkins (on guitar) and Marshall Grant (on bass). Cash apologized for his band not sounding professional or country enough, but Phillips liked the stripped down approach and worked out a sound that fit the young singer's style perfectly, more country than rockabilly, but nothing like the product coming out of Nashville. Collectively, Sun's young country artists challenged the complacency of the thriving country music industry at a time when it was moving

towards marketing a homogeneous, adult-orientated product suitable for an ever-expanding audience.³⁸

In 1954, country music executives could barely hear the rumblings coming from Sun Records. Business was booming, with the American public spending \$70 million on country entertainment in 1953. With disc sales in excess of \$26 million, country music accounted for over thirteen percent of the nation's retail record volume. While personal appearances continued to generate the most money for performers and promoters, all signs pointed towards the importance of radio and records in country music's future. Nationally, total record sales of all types of music would jump from \$190 million in 1954 to \$325 million in 1956. Recognizing the increasing importance of radio promotion, the country music industry in Nashville moved to create a systematic matter of marketing its product. To this end, they focused on the disc jockeys, with WSM executives inviting country platter spinners from around the country to a convention in 1952. Loosely organized and informal, the first gathering of its kind drew only eighty disc jockeys to Nashville. WSM's Second Annual Disc Jockey Festival, however, attracted approximately 500 country DJs to a more structured affair. The convention encouraged dialogue between artists, publishers, writers, radio personalities, and record executives, many of whom already resided in the Nashville area. A resounding success, Billboard termed in "one of the greatest

³⁸ Scotty Moore quoted in Guralnick, Lost Highway, 104; Carl Perkins quoted in Colin Escott, The Classic Carl Perkins (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1990) 4; Nick Tosches, "Hardrock Gunter, The Mysterious Pig-Iron Man" Journal of Country Music Vol. 10, No. 1 (1985): 36-39; Escott, The Classic Carl Perkins, 3-5; Colin Escott, Johnny Cash, The Sun Years (London: Charly Records, 1984) 2, 7-8.

public relations coups in the history of radio.” Most significantly, the convention led to the formation of a formal organization, Country Music Disc Jockeys’ Association (CMDJA). Membership increased from 100 to 215 in 1954. Approximately 750 country disc jockeys from across the nation showed up for WSM's third annual event in late 1954. CMDJA members at the meeting went on record stating their primary goal as increased public acceptance of country music and recognition from the nation’s music industry of associate status. Governor Clement gave a speech while the state’s First Lady invited wives of the visiting disc jockeys to tea at the Governor’s Mansion. Two years later, at the 1956 festival, the governor delivered a speech supporting country music, calling it “the heartbeat of America.” Additionally, he wholeheartedly endorsed the convention’s purpose: “I believe in country music. I want it to be promoted and to prosper.” While many of Nashville’s residents failed to see eye to eye with country music’s increasing presence, few could ignore it, and some undoubtedly benefited from the income generated by events like the disc jockeys’ conventions. Eventually, in 1958, the CMDJA grew into the Country Music Association, an organization dedicated to furthering country music’s legitimacy and national acceptance.³⁹

³⁹ Joe Martin, "Country Music Field Full of Green Stuff--Folding Kind That Is," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 21 (2 May 1954): 1; Clarence B. Newman, "Homespun Harmony: Hillbilly Music Sells Rural Customers, Keeps Record Counters Busy," The Wall Street Journal 3 May 1957; "WSM Invites 900 DJs to 'Opry' Anniversary," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 46 (14 November 1953): 17; Paul Ackerman, "Public Relations Coup: WSM DJ Festival Packs Real Wallop," The Billboard Vol. 65, No. 48 (28 November 1953): 1, 42; "Country Music Jocks Build for the Future," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 48 (27 November 1954): 11; Bill Sachs and Paul Ackerman, "WSM Country Fest Pulls Record Crowd," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 48 (27 November

When rockabilly struck with full force in 1956, the organizational structure established at the CMDJA conventions provided insulation from the destructive potential of youth-orientated music. Rock and roll rudely awakened everyone to the purchasing power of young, urban Americans and posed a potential threat to country music's existence. In the mid-fifties, working class, rural southerners no longer comprised the bulk of its listening audience; more significantly, they did not purchase as many records as urban and middle class listeners did. With records rising in importance, country music artists increasingly directed their product at the share of the market that spent money on discs. In the mid-late forties, with the jukebox industry thriving, this meant patrons of establishments with music machines. After Elvis Presley, however, they suddenly realized the importance of younger listeners. Consequently, the mid-fifties witnessed a proliferation of country music songs aimed at a youth market. This represented a complete about-face in the direction of country music lyrics, away from its conservative adult orientation towards a liberal, adolescent focus. Like a fox in a hen house, rockabilly threw country music into a state of chaos. It not only threatened its identity, but also upset the fragile peace that existed among country music's sub-genres.

After country music's nationalization in World War II, four sub-genres emerged directed at certain segments of the country audience. Post-War

1954): 11; Sanjek, Pennies From Heaven, 247; "Over 1000 to Fete WSM's 29th Year," The Billboard Vol. 66, No. 47 (20 November 1954): 13; Frank Clement, "A Free People's Music: A Talk By Frank G. Clement," National Disc Jockey Festival, Nashville, 9 November 1956; Rosenberg, Bluegrass, 132.

Traditionalists created music for southerners who resided in rural areas and those in cities that preferred older styles. Recognizing that country music needed to evolve, they adopted jazz techniques to acoustic instrumentation or applied electric instrumentation to pre-war singing and playing styles. Honky tonk represented the merging of southeast and Texas pre-war styles, a mixture of western swing, Jimmie Rodgers blues, and heart-on-sleeve singing all set to lyrics that captured the confusion of neo-urbanites from southern rural areas. Country-pop also embraced western swing instrumentation, but interacted more with American popular music in both its lyrical and vocal approach. It offered a product for the South's growing middle class and reached out to a national audience. Country-blues (before rockabilly) presented an eclectic mix of western swing instrumentation, nationally popular boogie rhythms, folk blues, and humorous lyrics for Californians and country music listeners across the nation disaffected with honky tonk's realism and country-pop's urbanity. When the centripetal forces of the Grand Ole Opry and the Nashville country music industry began pulling in country music's most popular artists, the genre became less heterogeneous, with honky tonk and country-pop artists, in particular, moving closer to one another in both lyrical and musical style. Both country-pop and honky tonk benefited from the new organizational structure that offered effective promotion and a concentrated base of operations. After shedding a great deal of its acrimony, honky tonk soared in popularity in the early 1950s, eventually climaxing in 1955 with nine of the year's top twelve singles. As it turns out, however, honky tonk's success was built on sand. With its urban/youth orientation and de-emphasis on fiddles and steel

guitars, rockabilly made the western-attired, twangy honky tonkers look foolish and passe. Most of the country-pop singers, on the other hand, wore suits and seemed to use steel guitars and fiddles only incidentally. When the rockabilly bomb went off in 1956, the CMDJA offered a safehouse for performers who fell in line with their goal of creating a radio-friendly, nationally acceptable product. The CMDJA/CMA reconciled country music with the new order by eventually conceding the youth market to the popular music industry and concentrating its efforts on marketing product for urban adults nationwide. In the mid-fifties, several singers emerged that personified the new marketing strategy, eventually known as the Nashville Sound. Some, like Don Gibson, continued in the country-pop tradition established by Red Foley and Eddy Arnold, using a mix of country instrumentation and pop vocal techniques. Others, like Jim Reeves and Ferlin Husky, displayed more willingness to experiment with lush orchestral sounds. Working with the finest singers and musicians in Nashville, producers Chet Atkins and Owen Bradley concentrated their efforts on releasing uptown, professional recordings. In the early sixties, Reeves and Patsy Cline rose above the rest as leading exponents of the Nashville Sound. These mid-late fifties developments shifted the balance of power on Nashville's Music Row from honky tonk to country-pop. Just as country-pop performers adopted elements of honky tonk in the late forties and early fifties, honky tonk performers of the late fifties moved closer to country-pop as a means to survival. Working without a safety net, western swing and county-blues vanished from the country scene, while post war traditionalists went into hibernation, soon to reemerge in the 1960s with the folk

revival. In the short run, rockabilly induced the repudiation of country-blues; in the long run, it led to country pop's eclipse of honky tonk and relegated western swing and post-war traditionalism to permanent underground status.

CONCLUSION

The country music industry had good reason to respond as it did to the rockabilly movement; it had come too far to surrender to the challenge presented by American youths' musical revolt. In the late 1930s, most Americans viewed "hillbilly" as woefully obsolescent music listened to by backward rubes. Few recognized the changes taking place within it. When it first appeared on record, country music bore the imprints of its rustic, unsophisticated roots. Male-dominated and rough-sounding, it gave little indication that few listeners beyond its rural, folk base could ever enjoy it. In the 1930s, however, barn dances domesticated the music, turning it into family entertainment that appealed to listeners across the country reeling in the effects of the Depression. With the barn dances and Jimmie Rodgers' success providing a firm foundation, the progressives of the late thirties began experimenting with different ways to make the music more appealing. On the radio and in the schoolhouses, the progressives accommodated to the tastes of their base audience of rural, white, working-class southerners while introducing them to new vocal and musical styles. Overcoming social and economic obstacles, country music burgeoned in the folk culture of the South.

During World War II, country music gained national attention through its transmission across the country via jukeboxes, cultural intermingling, and wartime migration. As a reciprocal process, nationalization not only introduced country music to America but contributed to the dilution of its predominantly rural and regional character as well. In gaining a new audience, country music sacrificed some of its

authenticity as a southern folk phenomenon. After nationalization, postwar traditional and honky tonk music emerged as reaffirmations of country's southern roots, the latter speaking for the South's urban migrants and the former representing those who remained in the southern hinterland. These two sub-genres grounded listeners caught up in the swirl of socio-cultural changes precipitated by the war in the commonality of shared experience while giving expression to their collective apprehensions.

Many country performers and listeners did not resist the urban impulse; for them, western swing and country-pop offered entertainment and escape from the drudgeries of everyday life. Born in Texas, western swing relocated to California in the early forties to become the music of transplanted southerners on the West Coast. Packing dance halls, listeners to western swing enjoyed the heavy-beat and big band sound offered by groups led by Bob Wills, Spade Cooley, and Tex Williams. For their own part, western swing musicians reveled in musical experimentation, embracing amplification, drums, and jazz-improvisational techniques in the name of musical progress. Their instrumentation, in subdued form, made its way back east, becoming an integral part of both the honky tonk and country-pop sounds. Taking a cue from popular wartime country singers like Gene Autry, Tex Ritter, and Al Dexter, country-pop vocalists offered a smooth, sophisticated product in tune with the South's ever-increasing middle-class tastes. Refusing to be denied their own music, young southerners sought out the exciting (and forbidden) sounds of rockabilly, wrapping themselves in its rebellious excess.

Behind the scenes, country music producers, promoters, radio announcers, and record company executives sought to sustain the economic advances made by the genre during the war. To this end, they became more involved in the process of country music's dissemination. Increasingly, they supported performers that appealed to a wider array of listeners. They knew not to tamper with country music's southern base, but they continually sought out ways to attract a potential audience of middle-class record buyers, television viewers, and concert audiences. Few country music acts objected to their efforts. They too bore an interest in country music's expansion and national acceptance. Personally and professionally, many objected to the hillbilly epithet, viewing it not only as an affront to their music, but to the people who listened to it as well. Most grew up in the rural South, immersed in its rich culture, and expressed pride in the region's fabric of folk tradition and communal ethos.

Country music in the 1940s and early 1950s reflected the struggle of its performers and listeners trying to come to terms with the modernizing forces pushing and pulling them away from their folk roots. While some embraced the opportunities presented by nationalization and modernization, others mourned the disappearance of country music's pre-war identity. In its flexibility and dynamism, the genre continued to encapsulate the lives of its listeners even as they scattered in different directions. When Elvis Presley burst on the scene in 1954, country music stood at a crossroads, forced to choose between accommodating to a new audience (and renouncing its adult orientation) or following through on its commitment to moving closer to the American mainstream (thereby risking the loss of its folk individuality). Country

music took steps towards the former but ultimately chose the latter course of action. Between 1939 and 1954 built upon the folk tradition in the process of forging the genre's modern form. After 1954, the sub-genres established during the period of modernization became traditions themselves, the musical pillars of all country music that followed. Ever-evolving and adapting to the needs of each generation of listeners, country music continued to manifest the world-view of its ever-changing audience. In the 1940s and early 1950s, it communicated the thoughts and emotions of white southerners coping with the realities of modern life.

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APPENDIX

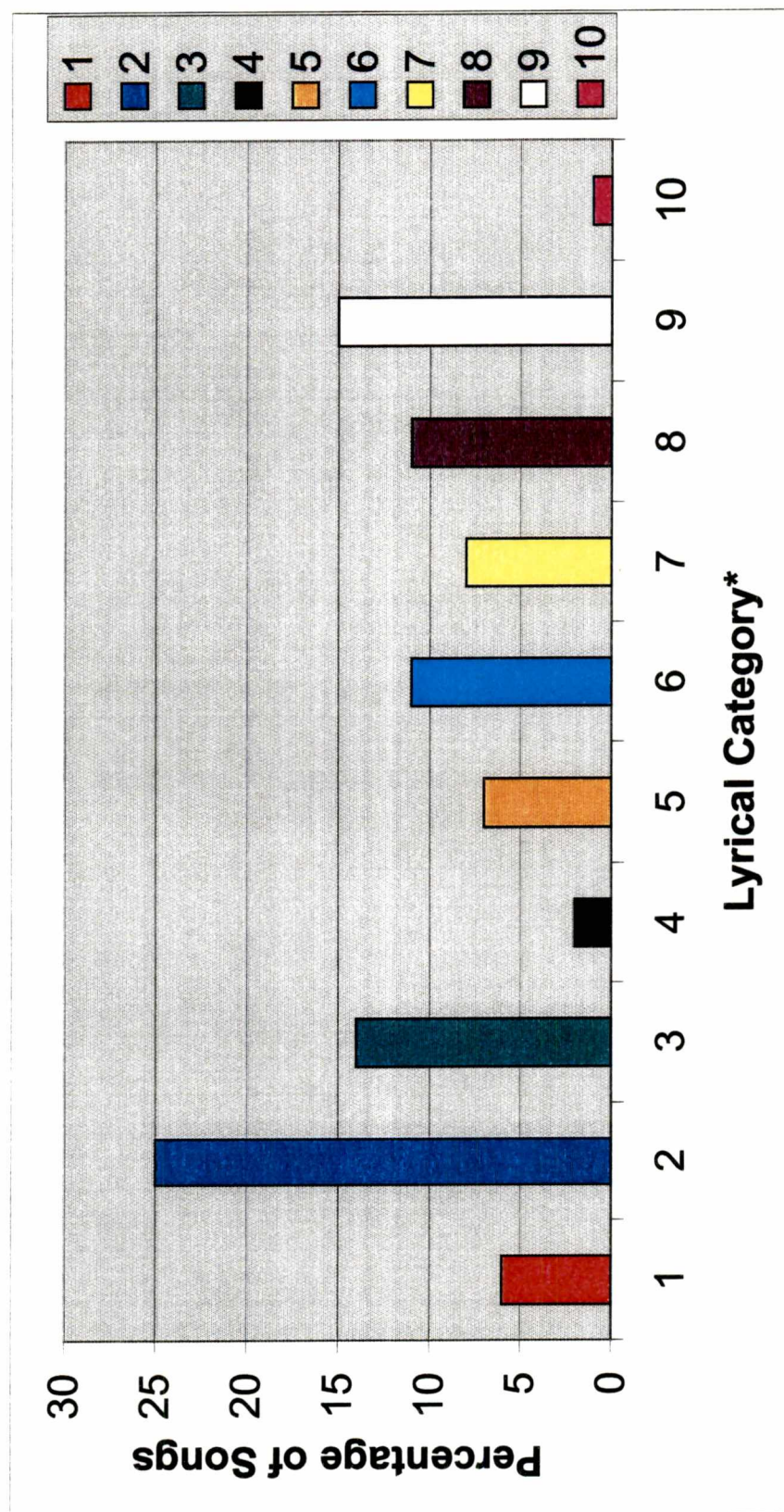


Figure A-1: Lyrical Analysis of Progressive Country Performers, 1939-1945**

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

**Performers listed in Table 1

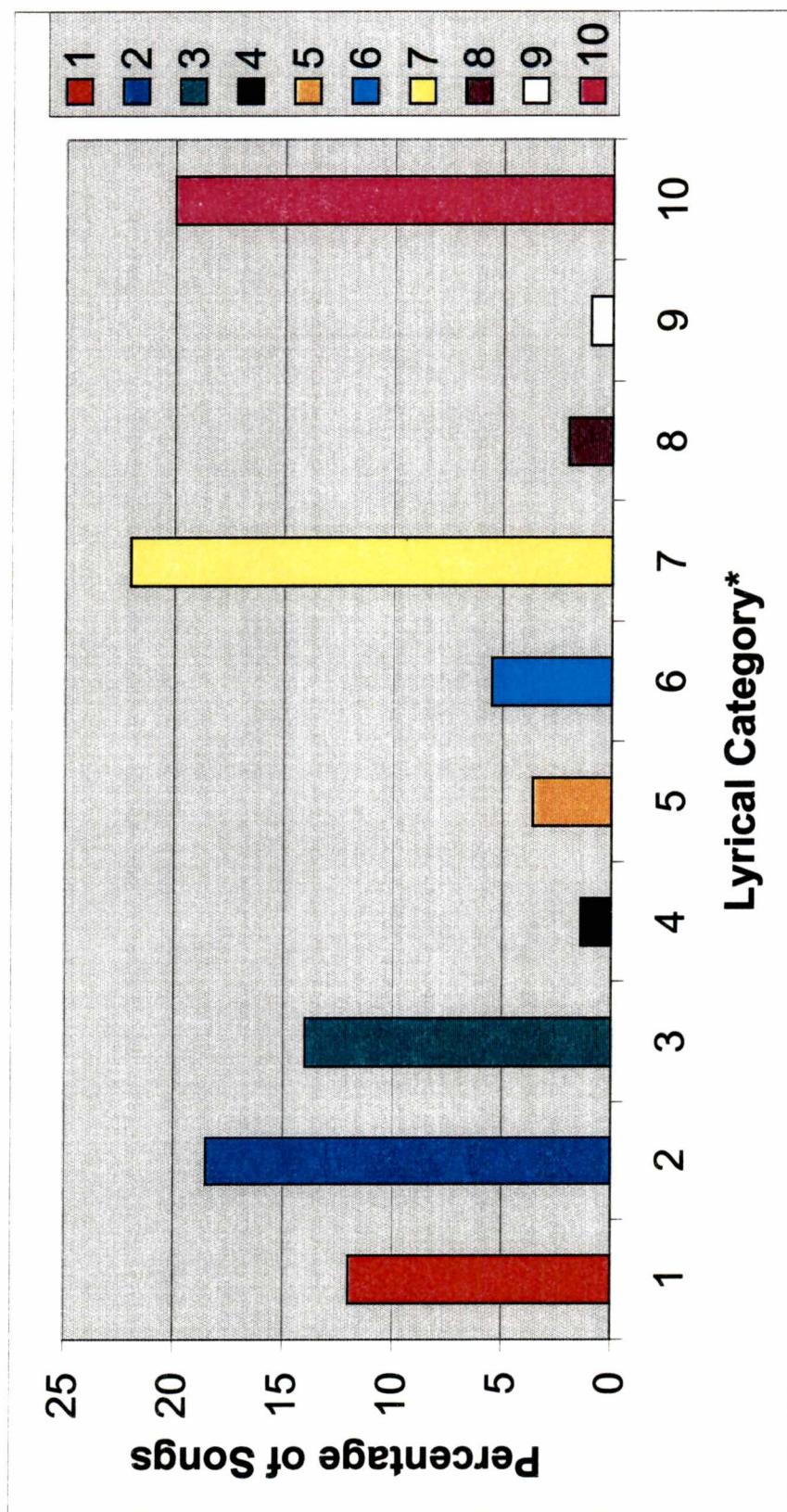


Figure A-2: Lyrical Analysis of Western Swing Performers, 1939-1954**

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

**Performers listed in Table 1

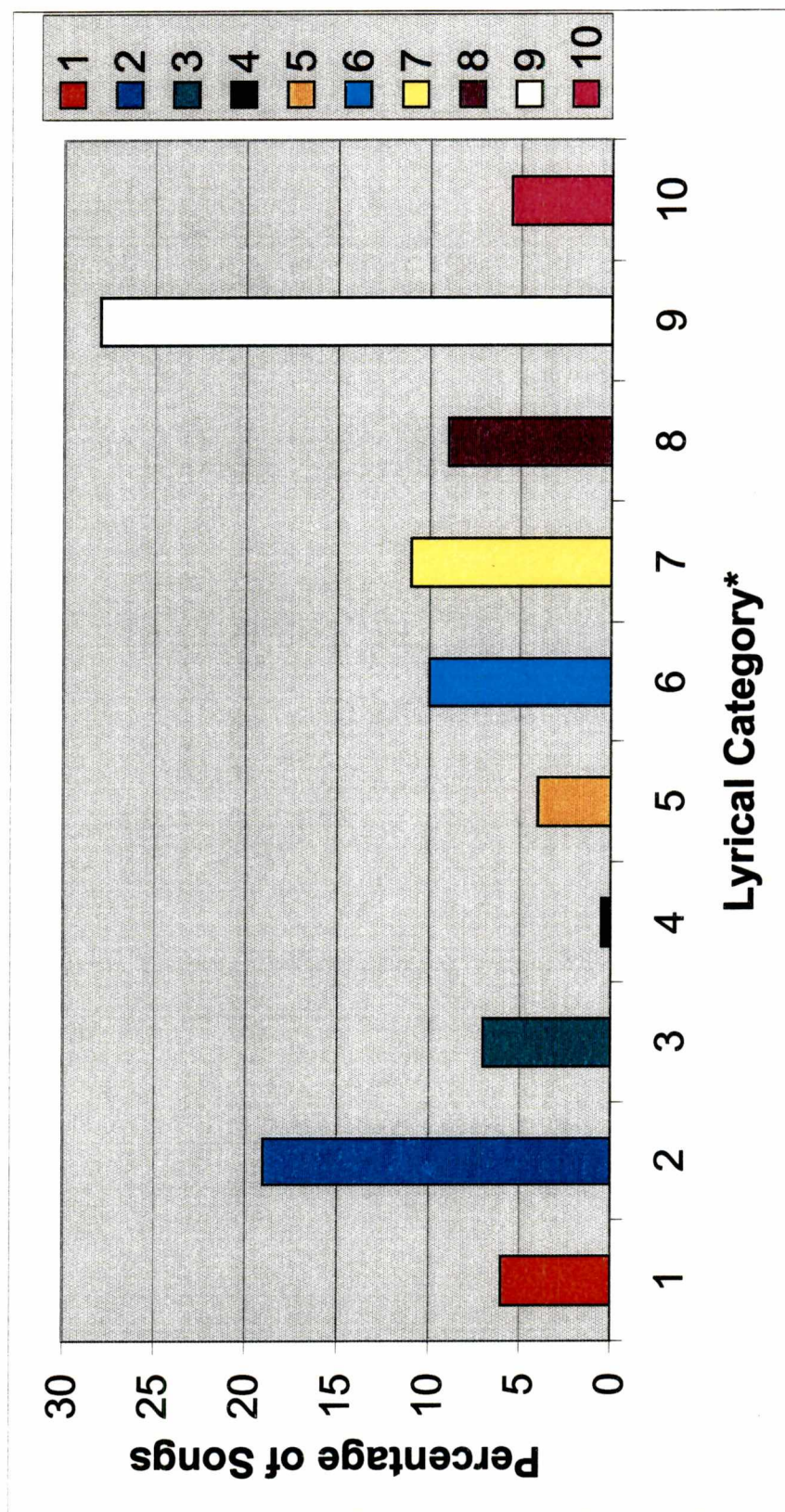


Figure A-3: Lyrical Analysis of Post-War Traditional Performers, 1946-1954**

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

**Performers listed in Table 1

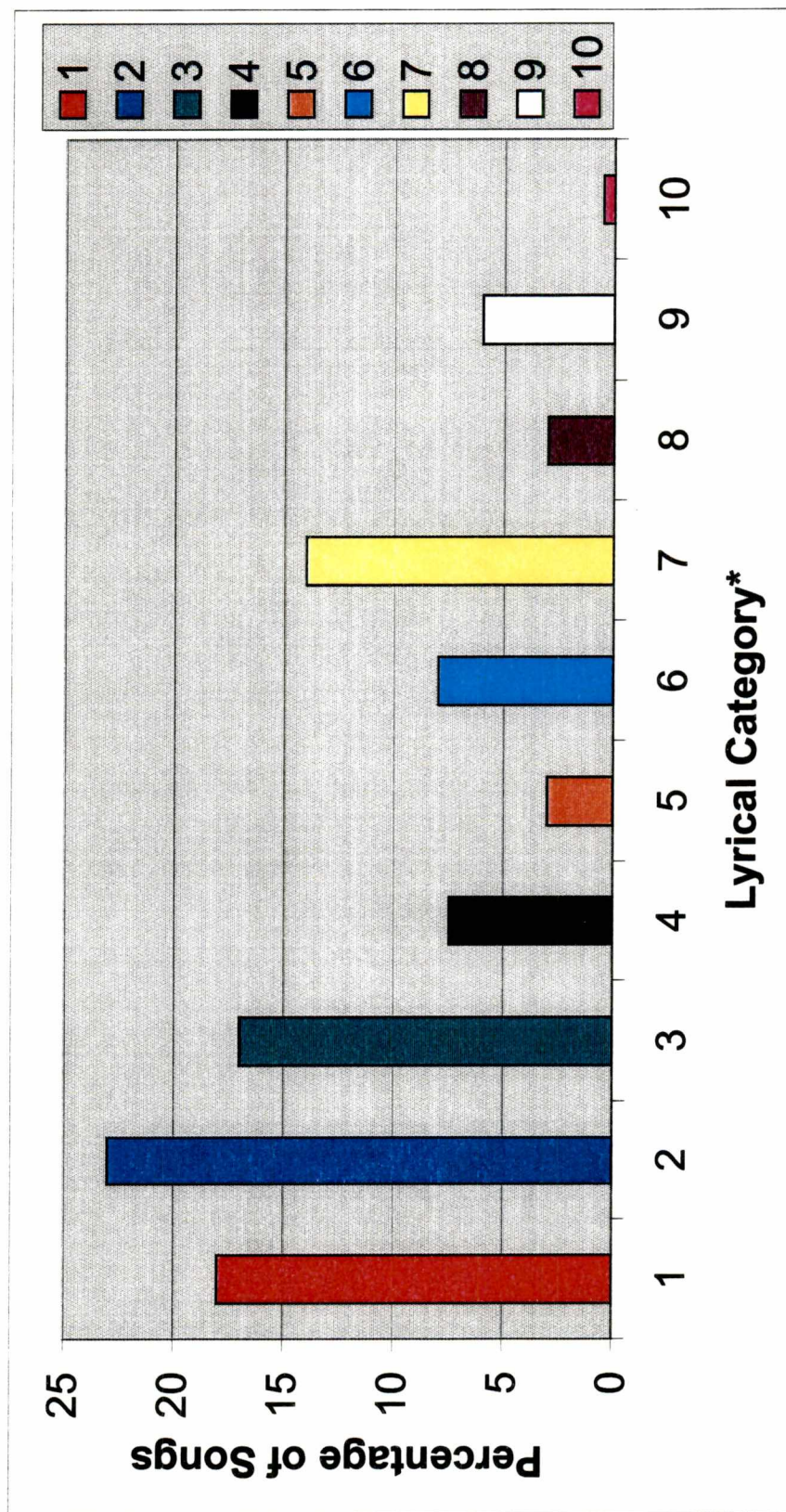


Figure A-4: Lyrical Analysis of Honky Tonk Performers, 1946-1954**

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

**Performers listed in Table 1

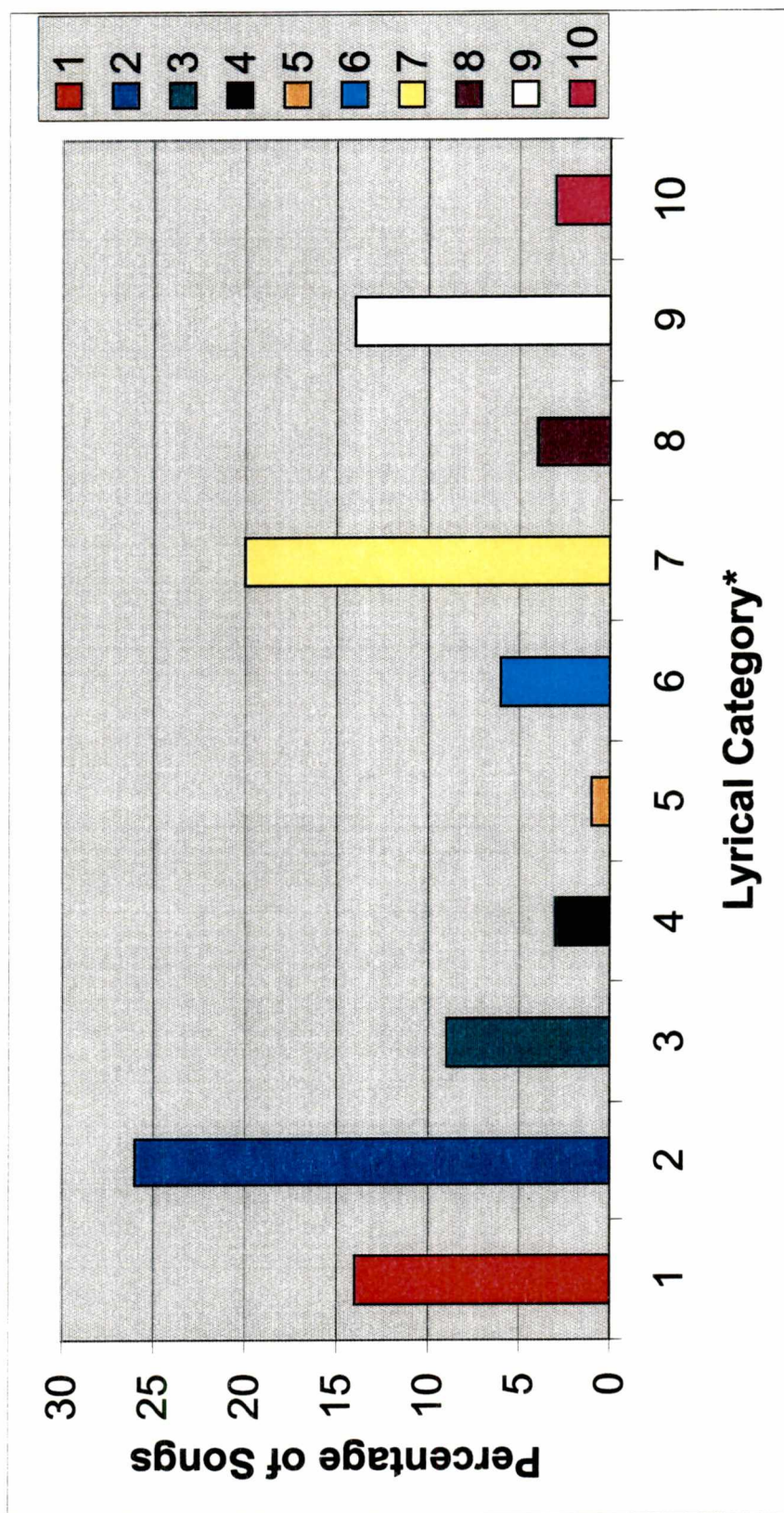


Figure A-5: Lyrical Analysis of Country-Pop Performers, 1946-1954**

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

**Performers listed in Table 1

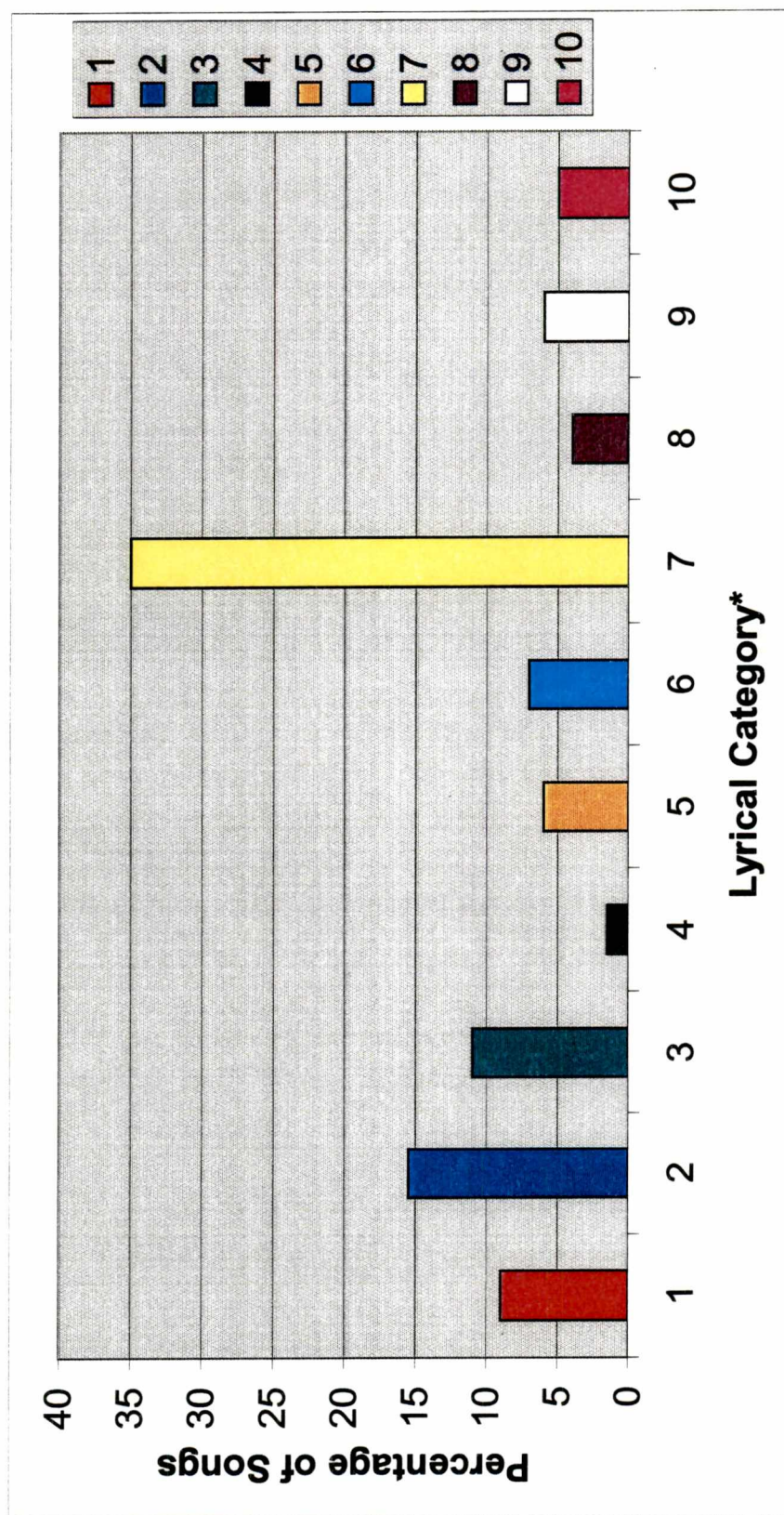


Figure A-6: Lyrical Analysis of Country-Blues Performers, 1946-1954**

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

**Performers listed in Table 1

Table A-1: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Roy Acuff, 1939-1944

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Answer to Sparkling Blue Eyes	Okeh 05041	8
Vagabond's Dream, A	Okeh 05041	6
Fly, Birdie, Fly	Okeh 05093	N/A
Walkin' in My Sleep	Okeh 05093	5
Beautiful Brown Eyes	Okeh 05163	8
Living on the Mountain, Baby Mine	Okeh 05163	1
Haven of Dreams	Okeh 05244	6
Old Age Pension Check	Okeh 05244	8
Eyes are Watching You	Okeh 05297	9
Drifting Too Far From Shore	Okeh 05297	9
Ida Red	Okeh 05359	7
Mother's Prayers Guide Me	Okeh 05403	6
I'm Building a Home	Okeh 05403	9
Smoky Mountain Moon	Okeh 05450	6
Would You Care	Okeh 05512	3
What Good Will It Do	Okeh 05512	3
When I Lay My Burdens Down	Okeh 05587	9
Streamlined Cannonball, The	Okeh 05638	6
Mule Skinner Blues (Blue Yodel #8)	Okeh 05638	5
Beneath that Lonely Mound of Clay	Okeh 05695	8
Blue Eyed Darling	Okeh 05695	2
Weary River	Okeh 05766	5
Farther Along	Okeh 05766	9
Broken Heart, The	Okeh 05820	3
Just to Ease My Worried Mind	Okeh 05820	6
Come Back Little Pal	Okeh 05956	2
Precious Jewel, The	Okeh 05956	8
Be Honest With Me	Okeh 06229	3
Worried Mind	Okeh 06229	2
Stuck Up Blues	Okeh 06300	8
Lying Woman Blues	Okeh 06300	3
Are You Thinking of Me Darling?	Okeh 06384	2
I Called and Nobody Answered	Okeh 06384	6
You're My Darling	Okeh 06463	1
Branded Wherever I Go	Okeh 06463	5
Brother Take Warning	Okeh 06512	9
Great Judgment Morning, The	Okeh 06512	9
I Know We're Saying Goodbye	Okeh 06550	2
You Are My Love	Okeh 06550	1

Table A-1: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Things That Might have Been	Okeh 06585	2
No Letter in the Mail	Okeh 06585	2
It Won't Be Long (Till I'll Be Leaving)	Okeh 06623	9
Just Inside the Pearly Gates	Okeh 06623	9
Wreck on the Highway	Okeh 06685	9
Fire Ball Mail	Okeh 06685	6
Night Train to Memphis	Okeh 06693	6
Low and Lonely	Okeh 06693	2
I'll Reap My Harvest in Heaven	Okeh 06704	9
Don't Make Me Go to Bed and I'll Be Good	Okeh 06704	8
Prodigal Son, The	Okeh 06716	9
Not a Word From Home	Okeh 06716	5
Write Me Sweetheart	Okeh 06723	3
I'll Forgive You But I Can't Forget	Okeh 06723	2
Blues in My Mind	Okeh 06735	2
I Heard a Silver Trumpet	Okeh 06735	8
It's Too Late Now to Worry Anymore	Okeh 06745	2
Wait for the Light to Shine	Okeh 06745	9
Lonesome Old River Blues	Columbia 20626	2
We Live in Two Different Worlds	Columbia 36856	3
Pins and Needles (In My Heart)	Columbia 36856	2
No One Will Ever Know	Columbia 36891	2
I Think I'll Go Home and Cry	Columbia 36891	2
They Can Only Fill One Grave	Columbia 37943	8
Do You Wonder Why	Columbia 37943	2
Easy Rockin' Chair	Columbia 37961	6

Source: Elizabeth Schlappi, Roy Acuff and His Smokey Mountain Boys
Discography (Cheswold: Disc Collector Publications, 1966).

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-2: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Eddy Arnold, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
All Alone in this World Without You	RCA Victor 20-1855	2
Can't Win, Can't Place, Can't Show	RCA Victor 20-1855	4
Many Tears Ago	RCA Victor 20-1871	2
That's How Much I Love You	RCA Victor 20-1948	1
Chained to a Memory	RCA Victor 20-1948	2
Be Sure There's No Mistake	RCA Victor 20-2058	3
What is Life Without Love	RCA Victor 20-2058	2
I Walk Alone	RCA Victor 20-2128	2
Cattle Call, The	RCA Victor 20-2128	5
I Couldn't Believe It Was True	RCA Victor 20-2241	2
It's A Sin	RCA Victor 20-2241	2
Don't Bother to Cry	RCA Victor 20-2332	3
I'll Hold You In My Heart (Till I Can Hold You In My Arms)	RCA Victor 20-2332	1
Easy Rockin' Chair	RCA Victor 20-2481	6
To My Sorrow	RCA Victor 20-2481	2
It Makes No Difference Now	RCA Victor 20-2489	3
Molly Darling	RCA Victor 20-2489	1
What a Fool I Was	RCA Victor 20-2700	2
Anytime	RCA Victor 20-2700	1
Bouquet of Roses	RCA Victor 20-2806	2
Texarkana Baby	RCA Victor 20-2806	7
My Daddy is Only A Picture	RCA Victor 20-3013	6
Just a Little Lovin' (Will Go a Long Way)	RCA Victor 20-3013	1
Then I Turned and Walked Slowly Away	RCA Victor 20-3174	2
Heart Full of Love, A	RCA Victor 20-3174	2
There's Not a Thing (I Wouldn't do for You)	RCA Victor 21-0002	1
Don't Rob Another Man's Castle	RCA Victor 21-0002	6
Echo of Your Footsteps, The	RCA Victor 21-0051	2
One Kiss Too Many	RCA Victor 21-0051	3
Show Me the Way Back to Your Heart	RCA Victor 21-0083	2
I'm Throwing Rice (At the Girl I Love)	RCA Victor 21-0083	2
C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S	RCA Victor 21-0124	9
Will Santy Come to Shanty Town?	RCA Victor 21-0124	8
There's No Wings on My Angel	RCA Victor 21-0134	1
You Know How Talk Gets Around	RCA Victor 21-0134	8
Take Me In Your Arms and Hold Me	RCA Victor 21-0146	2
Mama and Daddy Broke My Heart	RCA Victor 21-0146	6
Little Angel With the Dirty Face	RCA Victor 21-0300	6
Why Should I Cry?	RCA Victor 21-0300	3
Cuddle Buggin' Baby	RCA Victor 21-0342	1
Enclosed, One Broken Heart	RCA Victor 21-0342	2
Prison Without Walls, A	RCA Victor 21-0382	2

Table A-2: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Lovebug Itch, The	RCA Victor 21-0382	7
White Christmas	RCA Victor 21-0390	6
Santa Claus is Comin' to Town	RCA Victor 21-0390	7
Tie Me to Your Apron Strings Again	RCA Victor 21-0412	6
There's Been a Change in Me	RCA Victor 21-0412	7
I'm Writing a Letter to the Lord	RCA Victor 21-0425	9
May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You	RCA Victor 21-0425	9
Million Miles From Your Heart, A	RCA Victor 21-0444	2
Kentucky Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0444	2
Something Old, Something New	RCA Victor 21-0476	2
I Wanna Play House With You	RCA Victor 21-0476	1
Jesus and the Atheist	RCA Victor 21-0495	9
He Knows	RCA Victor 21-0495	9
Smokey the Bear	RCA Victor BY-38	7
Horace the Horse	RCA Victor BY-38	7
Heart Strings	RCA Victor 20-4273	2
Somebody's Been Beating My Time	RCA Victor 20-4273	3
Call Me Your Sweetheart	RCA Victor 20-4413	1
Bundle of Southern Sunshine	RCA Victor 20-4413	1
Take My Hand, Precious Lord	RCA Victor 20-4490	9
Open Thy Merciful Arms	RCA Victor 20-4490	9
Anything That's Part of You	RCA Victor 20-4569	1
Easy on the Eyes	RCA Victor 20-4569	7
Someone Calls Me Daddy	RCA Victor 20-4646	6
(Don't Ever Take the) Ribbons From Your Hair	RCA Victor 20-4646	6
Full Time Job, A	RCA Victor 20-4787	7
Shepherd of My Heart	RCA Victor 20-4787	1
I'd Trade All My Tomorrows (For Just One Yesterday)	RCA Victor 20-4954	2
Older and Bolder	RCA Victor 20-4954	7
My Desire	RCA Victor 20-5020	9
I Want to Thank You, Lord	RCA Victor 20-5020	9
Condemned Without a Trial	RCA Victor 20-5108	8
Eddy's Song	RCA Victor 20-5108	7
I'm Waiting for Ships That Never Come In	RCA Victor 20-5188	4
I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter	RCA Victor 20-5188	2
Angry	RCA Victor 20-5189	2
When Your Hair Has Turned to Silver	RCA Victor 20-5189	1
Missouri Waltz	RCA Victor 20-5192	6
Moonlight and Roses	RCA Victor 20-5192	2
You Always Hurt the One You Love	RCA Victor 20-5193	2
I'm Gonna Lock My Heart (And Throw Away the Key)	RCA Victor 20-5193	3

Table A-2: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Old Rugged Cross, The	RCA Victor 20-5196	9
Have Thine Own Way, Lord	RCA Victor 20-5196	9
When I've Done My Best	RCA Victor 20-5197	9
Someday, Somewhere	RCA Victor 20-5197	9
Your Left Over Kisses	RCA Victor 20-5305	N/A
How's the World Treating You	RCA Victor 20-5305	2
Mama, Come Get Your Baby Boy	RCA Victor 20-5415	7
If I Never Get to Heaven	RCA Victor 20-5415	4
I'll Never Get Over You	RCA Victor 20-5525	2
I Really Don't Want to Know	RCA Victor 20-5525	1
Robe of Calvary	RCA Victor 20-5601	9
Prayer	RCA Victor 20-5601	9
Free Home Demonstration	RCA Victor 20-5305	7
My Everything	RCA Victor 20-5634	1
Second Fling, A	RCA Victor 20-5634	N/A
Chapel on the Hill, The	RCA Victor 20-5753	9
Touch of God's Hand, The	RCA Victor 20-5753	9
Hep Cat Baby	RCA Victor 20-5805	7
This is the Thanks I Get (For Loving You)	RCA Victor 20-5805	3
Christmas Can't Be Far Away	RCA Victor 20-5905	6
I'm Your Private Santa Claus	RCA Victor 20-5905	7
I've Been Thinking	RCA Victor 20-6000	1
Don't Forget	RCA Victor 20-6000	1
I Always have Someone to Turn To	RCA Victor 20-6001	9
It Took A Miracle	RCA Victor 20-6001	9
Two Kinds of Love	RCA Victor 20-6069	1
In Time	RCA Victor 20-6069	2
Just Call Me Lonesome	RCA Victor 20-6198	2
Trouble in Mind	RCA Victor 20-6365	4
When You Said Goodbye	RCA Victor 20-6365	2
I Wouldn't Know Where to Begin	RCA Victor 20-6699	2
Dozen Hearts, A	RCA Victor 20-6773	2
Sittin' On Santa Claus' Lap	RCA Victor WY-490	7
Present From Santa Claus, A	RCA Victor WY-490	7
Horse in Striped Pajamas, The	RCA Victor WY-492	7
Why, Daddy?	RCA Victor WY-492	7

Source: Michael Streissguth, Eddy Arnold: Pioneer of the Nashville Sound (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997) 223-232.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-3: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Bailes Brothers, 1946-1953

Song	Release Number	Category*
Searching for a Soldier's Grave	Columbia 36932	8
As Long As I Live	Columbia 36932	2
Dust on the Bible	Columbia 37154	9
I've Got My One Way Ticket to the Sky	Columbia 37154	9
I Want to Be Loved	Columbia 37154	1
Drunkard's Grave, The	Columbia 37341	6
There's Tears In My Eyes All the Time	Columbia 37927	2
I Guess I'll Go On Dreaming	Columbia 37927	2
We're Living in the Last Days Now	King 1015	9
Jesus is the One	King 1015	9
Future Holds Nothing, The	King 1130	2
She Has Forgotten	King 1130	2
Broken Marriage Vows	King 752	3
Everybody Knew the Truth But Me	King 752	2
Down the Valley of the Shadow	King 753	8
Something Got Hold of Me	King 753	9
He'll Strike You Down	King 929	9
Building on the Sand	King 929	9
What Will You Be Doing Then	King 938	9
Romans Ten and Nine	King 938	9
Somebody's Praying for Me	King 962	9
Ashamed to Own the Blessed Savior	King 962	9
Empty Mansion, An	King 985	9
Daniel Prayed	King 985	9
If You Have Retreated From God	Columbia 20429	9
Sinner Kneel Down and Pray	Columbia 20429	9
My Heart Echoes	Columbia 20457	2
Will the Angels Have a Sweetheart	Columbia 20457	8
Building on the Sand	Columbia 20493	9
Has the Devil Got a Mortgage On You	Columbia 20493	9
Read Romans Ten and Nine	Columbia 20529	9
Come to the Savior	Columbia 20529	9
You'll Always Be the Only One	Columbia 20566	2
Oh So Many Tears	Columbia 20566	2
Whiskey is the Devil (In Liquid Form)	Columbia 37583	6
We're Living in the Last Days Now	Columbia 37583	9
Ashamed to Own the Blessed Savior	Columbia 37964	9
Do You Expect a Reward From God	Columbia 37964	9
Remember Me	Columbia 38098	1

Table A-3: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Pretty Flowers	Columbia 38098	8
I Can't Help What Others Do	King 1207	9
There's a Difference Between Religion and Salvation	King 1207	9
That's What We Need	King 1242	9
Jesus Blood	King 1242	9
Avenue of Prayer	King 1273	9
There's a Handwriting on the Wall	King 1273	9
Muddy Sea of Sin	King 1317	9
Watch and Pray	King 1317	9
Goodbye Hallelujah I'm Gone	King 1358	9
Standing Somewhere in the Shadows	King 1358	9

Source: Ivan M. Tribe, "The Bailes Brothers," Bluegrass Unlimited Vol. 9, No. 8 (February 1975): 13.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-4: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Blue Sky Boys, 1939-1940

Song	Release Number	Category*
When the Roses Bloom in Dixieland	Bluebird 8294	1
Are You From Dixie?	Bluebird 8294	6
Give Me My Roses Now	Bluebird 8308	9
House Where We Were Wed, The	Bluebird 8308	3
There's No Other Love For Me	Bluebird 8339	2
God Sent My Little Girl	Bluebird 8339	9
Someone's Last Day	Bluebird 8356	8
She'll Be There	Bluebird 8356	6
Lightning Express, The	Bluebird 8369	6
Royal Telephone, The	Bluebird 8369	9
I'm S-A-V-E-D	Bluebird 8401	8
Whispering Hope	Bluebird 8401	9
She's Somebody's Darling Once More	Bluebird 8446	8
Mary of the Wild Moor	Bluebird 8446	8
We Parted By the Riverside	Bluebird 8482	2
Butcher's Boy, The	Bluebird 8482	8
Convict and the Rose, The	Bluebird 8522	8
Father, Dear Father, Come Home	Bluebird 8522	9
Only One Step More	Bluebird 8552	9
East Bound Train, The	Bluebird 8552	6
Last Mile of the Way, The	Bluebird 8597	9
This Evening Light	Bluebird 8597	9
Picture on the Wall, A	Bluebird 8646	6
Pictures From Life's Other Side	Bluebird 8646	9
In the Hills of Roane County	Bluebird 8693	5
Brown Eyes	Bluebird 8693	2
Short Life of Trouble	Bluebird 8829	8
Don't Say Goodbye If You Love Me	Bluebird 8829	2
Turn Your Radio On	Bluebird 8843	9
Kneel At the Cross	Bluebird 8843	9
Why Not Confess	Bluebird 33-0516	3
Since the Angels Took My Mother Far Away	Bluebird 33-0516	6

Source: Brad McCuen, "Blue Sky Boys on Record," Country Directory Vol. 1, No. 1 (1960): 20-23.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-5: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Bill Boyd, 1940-1951

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Drink the Barrel Dry	Bluebird 8394	1
Sunset Trail to Texas	Bluebird 8394	6
Xenda Waltz, The	Bluebird 8409	10
Down at Polka Joe's	Bluebird 8409	1
Pussy, Pussy, Pussy	Bluebird 8414	7
You Better Stop That Cattin' Around	Bluebird 8414	3
I Wish You Knew the Way I Feel	Bluebird 8458	2
You Take It	Bluebird 8458	10
I'll Take You Back Again	Bluebird 8498	2
I Want a Feller	Bluebird 8498	2
If You'll Come Back	Bluebird 8533	2
There's A Light Shining Bright	Bluebird 8533	8
I'll Be Back in a Year, Little Darlin'	Bluebird 8721	8
Swing Steel Swing	Bluebird 8721	10
Sweethearts or Strangers	Bluebird 8728	3
Now I Feel the Way You Do	Bluebird 8728	2
They Go Goo-Goo-Ga-Ga-Goofy Over Gobs	Bluebird 8747	7
Don't Let the Barrel Go Dry Polka	Bluebird 8747	1
Flower of Texas	Bluebird 8769	10
I Can't Forget (No Matter How I Try)	Bluebird 8769	2
Jitterbug Jive	Bluebird 8787	10
I Guess You Don't Care Anymore	Bluebird 8787	2
No Dice	Bluebird 8823	7
Hold On to That Thing	Bluebird 8823	7
Rollin' Down the Great Divide	Bluebird 8885	5
(When I Had) My Pony on the Range	Bluebird 8885	5
Home Coming Waltz	Bluebird 8900	10
Over the Waves Waltz	Bluebird 8900	10
Tell Me Why My Daddy Won't Come Home	Bluebird 8910	8
Letter I Never Did Mail, The	Bluebird 8910	2
My Birmingham Rose	Bluebird 9014	8
Tumbleweed Trail	Bluebird 9014	5
Jennie Lou	Bluebird 33-0501	1
Put Your Troubles Down the Hatch	Bluebird 33-0501	1
At Mail Call Today	Bluebird 33-0530	8
No Time For Tears	Bluebird 33-0533	8
Highways are Happy Ways	Bluebird 33-0533	6
Shame On You	Bluebird 33-0539	3
Roadside Rag	RCA Victor 20-1793	10

Table A-5: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
These Tears Are Not For You	RCA Victor 20-1793	3
I Just Don't Know Why But I Do	RCA Victor 20-1888	2
(Down the) Trail to San Antone	RCA Victor 20-1888	6
Jim's Polka	RCA Victor 20-2050	10
Oklahoma Bound	RCA Victor 20-2050	6
Under the Double Eagle	RCA Victor 20-2068	10
Over the Waves Waltz	RCA Victor 20-2068	10
Homecoming Waltz	RCA Victor 20-2069	10
Shame On You	RCA Victor 20-2069	3
I Wish We'd Never Met	RCA Victor 20-2172	3
Palace in Dallas	RCA Victor 20-2172	6
Dream Train	RCA Victor 20-2270	6
New Fort Worth Rag	RCA Victor 20-2270	10
Tellin' Lies	RCA Victor 20-2379	3
Now or Never	RCA Victor 20-2379	2
Don't Turn My Picture to the Wall	RCA Victor 20-2562	2
Out in the Rain Again	RCA Victor 20-2562	3
I'm Writing a Letter to Heaven	RCA Victor 20-2697	8
Vacant Heart	RCA Victor 20-2697	3
Train Song, The	RCA Victor 20-2800	10
'Way Out There	RCA Victor 20-2800	5
Closed For Repairs	RCA Victor 20-2833	3
American Patrol	RCA Victor 20-2833	10
Pull Down the Shades and Lock the Door	RCA Victor 20-2960	7
Monterrey Polka	RCA Victor 20-2960	10
Skaters Waltz, The	RCA Victor 20-3067	10
Never Break a Promise to a Woman	RCA Victor 20-3067	2
You're Laughing Up Your Sleeve	RCA Victor 20-3068	3
Southern Steel Guitar	RCA Victor 20-3068	10
You're Laughing Up Your Sleeve	RCA Victor 20-3190	3
Southern Steel Guitar	RCA Victor 20-3190	10
Too Blue to Care	RCA Victor 21-0000	3
I Always Lose	RCA Victor 21-0000	4
Lone Star Rag	RCA Victor 21-0045	10
Without a Woman's Love	RCA Victor 21-0045	2
Varsoviana	RCA Victor 21-0071	10
Blue Danube Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0071	10
Pass the Turnip Greens	RCA Victor 21-0109	7
Poison Ivy	RCA Victor 21-0109	7

Table A-5: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Up on the House Top	RCA Victor 21-0126	7
Jingle Bell Polka	RCA Victor 21-0126	7
Yes You Did	RCA Victor 21-0164	2
Texas Blues	RCA Victor 21-0164	10
Letters Have No Arms	RCA Victor 21-0208	2
Bandera Waltz, The	RCA Victor 21-0208	2
Come and Get It	RCA Victor 21-0335	7
Red River Rag	RCA Victor 21-0335	10
They'll Never Take Her Love From Me	RCA Victor 21-0351	2
Why Don't You Love Me	RCA Victor 21-0351	2
Yes I Do, Yes I Do, Yes I Do	RCA Victor 21-0375	1
Bill Boyd Rag	RCA Victor 21-0375	10
Mean, Mean, Mean	RCA Victor 21-0410	7
Cuckoo Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0410	10
Drifting Texas Sand	RCA Victor 21-0449	7
Stop	RCA Victor 21-0449	10
Why Do You Punish Me	RCA Victor 21-0482	2
Gladiola Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0482	10

Sources: Brad McCuen, "Bill Boyd and His Cowboy Ramblers," Disc Collector No. 3 (n.d.): 17-20; "Bill Boyd," Meet the Artist: Biographical Sketches of Leading Performing Artists With Listings of Their Recordings Of BMI-Licensed Songs, by BMI (New York: Broadcast Music, Inc., 1952) n.p..

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-6: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Cliff Bruner, 1939-1950

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Truck Driver's Blues	Decca 5725	5
I'm Tired of You	Decca 5725	3
Kelly Swing	Decca 5728	10
San Antonio Rose	Decca 5728	10
Star Dust	Decca 5743	10
Singin' the Low Down Blues Down Low	Decca 5743	3
Other Way, The	Decca 5753	2
Little White Lies	Decca 5753	2
Jessie	Decca 5769	10
Girl That You Loved Long Ago	Decca 5769	2
Over the Hill	Decca 5785	5
It's All Over Now (I Won't Worry)	Decca 5785	2
Peggy Lou	Decca 5797	10
Tell Me Why Little Girl, Tell Me Why	Decca 5797	3
I'll Keep on Smiling	Decca 5808	3
I'll Forgive You (But I Can't Forget)	Decca 5808	3
Because	Decca 5819	1
I'm Still in Love With You	Decca 5819	2
Ten Pretty Girls	Decca 5824	10
Sparkling Blue Eyes	Decca 5824	1
Take Me Back Again	Decca 5836	2
I'm Headin' for That Ranch in the Sky	Decca 5836	9
You Don't Love Me, But I'll Always Care	Decca 5849	3
Over the Trail	Decca 5849	5
Sorry (I'll Say I'm Sorry)	Decca 5860	2
New Falling Rain Blues	Decca 5860	2
I'll Keep Thinking of You	Decca 5871	2
'Neath the Purple on the Hills	Decca 5871	6
Draft Board Blues	Decca 5953	1
Tequila Rag	Decca 5953	10
Let Me Smile My Last Smile at You	Decca 5961	8
Sun Has Gone Down on Our Love, The	Decca 5961	2
Jessie's Sister	Decca 5974	10
My Till Will Come Someday	Decca 5974	3
I'll Be Faithful	Decca 6012	2
Red River Rose	Decca 6012	2
If It's Wrong to Love You	Corinth 64042	2
Snowflakes	Decca 46026	2
That's What I Like About the South	Decca 46026	5

Table A-6: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
My Pretty Blonde	Decca 46033	2
I'll Try Not to Cry	Decca 46033	2
Born to Be Blue	Decca 46044	4
Won't You Mend My Aching Heart	Decca 46044	2
You Always Hurt the One You Love	Decca 46101	3
Don't Make Me Blue	Decca 46101	1
Lucille From Mobile	Mercury 6046	1
You Were All the World to Me	Mercury 6046	2
Santa Fe Waltz	Ayo 102	10
Rio Grande Polka	Ayo 102	10
Unfaithful One	Ayo 103	4
San Antonio Blues	Ayo 103	7
Ouch	Ayo 105	7
You Took Advantage of a Lonely Heart	Ayo 105	3
Out of Business	Ayo 107	3
Mister Postman	Ayo 107	2
Sweetest Little Danny	Ayo 109	6
I Was a Gambler in Texas	Ayo 109	5
You Better Do Better Baby	Ayo 112	3
Hard Luck Blues	Ayo 112	7
You've Got to Give to Me What's Mine	Ayo 113	2
I'm Dying By Pieces Dear	Ayo 113	2

Source: Kevin Coffey, Cliff Bruner and His Texas Wanderers (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1997) 54-58.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-7: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Callahan Brothers, 1939-1941

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Best Pal I Had is Gone, The	Vocalion 04716	8
I Want to Ask the Stars	Vocalion 04716	4
Lonesome Freight Train Blues	Vocalion 04779	5
My Blue Eyed Jane	Vocalion 04779	1
Dovie Darling	Vocalion 04883	2
Oh Lord Show Me the Light	Vocalion 04883	8
They're At Rest Together	Decca 5952	8
Sweet Thing	Decca 5952	2
John Henry	Decca 5998	5
Jealous Woman Won't Do, A	Decca 5998	7
My Darling Little Girl	Decca 6045	6
Sad Memories	Decca 6045	2

Source: Bob Pinson, "The Callahan Brothers," Country Directory Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 5-13.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-8: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Carlisle Brothers, 1939-1945

Song	Release Number	Category*
Gonna Raise a Ruckus Tonight	Decca 5774	1
There is No More That I Can Say	Decca 5774	3
Don't Let Me Worry Your Little Mind	Decca 5778	3
Broken Heart	Decca 5778	2
Traveling Home	Decca 5793	9
I'm Sorry That's All I Can Say	Decca 5793	2
Goin' Down the Valley One By One	Decca 5807	9
Beneath the Old Pine Tree	Decca 5807	2
There'll Come A Time	Decca 5881	6
Juanita	Decca 5881	2
Don't Mention Me	Decca 5892	3
Nobody Cares	Decca 5892	4
Somewhere Somebody's Waiting for You	Decca 5903	6
Will You Always Love Me Darling	Decca 5903	1
Three Women to Every Man	Decca 5913	5
Dollar's All I Crave, A	Decca 5913	8
Flag That Train	Decca 5921	5
Go and Leave Me If You Wish Too	Decca 5921	3
I Wonder Who's Sorry Now	Decca 6075	3
I'd Like to Be Your Shadow in the Moonlight	Decca 6075	1
I'm Sorry Now	Bluebird 8862	4
You'll Never Know	Bluebird 8862	2
No Wedding Bells	Bluebird 8936	3
I Believe I'm Entitled to You	Bluebird 8936	1
Sugar Cane Mama	Bluebird 8996	1
She Waits For Me There	Bluebird 8996	8
Maggie Get the Hammer	King 504	7
I Paid With a Broken Heart	King 504	2
Roll On Your Weary Way	King 510	3
Baby, You Flubbed Your Dub With Me	King 510	7

Sources: Cary Ginell, The Decca Hillbilly Discography (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1989) 151-152; Roy Will Hearne, "Bluebird Numerical Listing," Country and Western Spotlight Nos. 24-41 (December 1958-March 1963); Thurston Moore and Ed Kahn, "King 500 Series Numerical," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 4, No. 10-Vol. 6, No. 17 (Summer 1968-Spring 1970).

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-9: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Spade Cooley, 1944-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Shame on You	Columbia 06731	3
Pair of Broken Hearts, A	Columbia 06731	2
I've Taken All I'm Gonna Take From You	Columbia 06746	3
Forgive Me One More Time	Columbia 06746	3
You Can't Break My Heart	Columbia 36935	3
Detour	Columbia 36935	7
Crazy 'Cause I Love You	Columbia 37058	3
Three Way Boogie	Columbia 37058	10
Oklahoma Stomp	Columbia 37237	10
You Better Do It Now	Columbia 37237	7
Spadella	Columbia 37585	10
You Never Miss the Water (Till the Well Runs Dry)	Columbia 37585	2
Cow Bell Polka	Columbia 37937	10
Troubled Over You	Columbia 37937	7
Steel Guitar Rag	Columbia 38054	10
I Guess I've Been Dreaming Again	Columbia 38054	2
Yodeling Polka	Columbia 20431	10
Hide Your Face	Columbia 20431	3
Devil's Dream	Columbia 20490	10
You'll Rue the Day	Columbia 20490	3
It's Dark Outside	RCA Victor 20-2181	7
Minuet in Swing	RCA Victor 20-2181	10
Bogg's Boogie	RCA Victor 20-2295	10
Red Hair and Green Eyes	RCA Victor 20-2295	7
Who Dug This Hole I'm In	RCA Victor 20-2384	7
Red Hot Polka	RCA Victor 20-2384	7
Tailor Made Baby	RCA Victor 20-2552	7
All Aboard For Oklahoma	RCA Victor 20-2552	6
Spanish Fandango	RCA Victor 20-2668	1
Best Deal in Town	RCA Victor 20-2668	1
Whistle Bait	RCA Victor 20-2742	7
Blonde Fiddle Blues	RCA Victor 20-2742	10
Oklahoma Waltz	RCA Victor 20-2866	6
That's the Last Straw	RCA Victor 20-2866	3
Topeka Polka	RCA Victor 20-3020	10
Big Chief Boogie	RCA Victor 20-3020	7
Fickle Woman	RCA Victor 20-3137	3
Texas Steel Guitar	RCA Victor 20-3137	10
Call Me Darling, Do	RCA Victor 20-3258	1

Table A-9: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Four Fiddle Polka	RCA Victor 20-3258	10
Arizona Waltz	RCA Victor 20-3496	1
Don't Call Me Sweetheart Anymore	RCA Victor 20-3496	3
You Can't Take Texas Out Of Me	RCA Victor 20-3547	6
I've Got a Heart Filled With Love	RCA Victor 20-3547	1
Wagon Wheels	RCA Victor 20-3672	5
Last Roundup, The	RCA Victor 20-3672	8
Lights Out	RCA Victor 20-3673	1
In the Chapel in the Moonlight	RCA Victor 20-3673	1
Old Spinning Wheel	RCA Victor 20-3674	10
Empty Saddles	RCA Victor 20-3674	5
Mountain Boys Have Fun With Mountain Girls	RCA Victor 20-3894	7
Nine-Tenths of the Tennessee River	RCA Victor 20-3894	2
I Miss You Already	RCA Victor 20-3969	2
Someone Left the Golden Gate Open	RCA Victor 20-3969	1
Lord Nottingham's War Dance	RCA Victor 21-0027	10
Texas Playboy Rag	RCA Victor 21-0027	10
Flop Eared Mule	RCA Victor 21-0080	10
Wagonner	RCA Victor 21-0080	10
Wake Up Susan	RCA Victor 21-0081	10
Eighth of January	RCA Victor 21-0081	10
6/8 to the Bar	RCA Victor 21-0082	10
Ida Red	RCA Victor 21-0082	10
Skip to My Lou	RCA Victor 21-0127	10
Rickett's Reel	RCA Victor 21-0127	10
Old Joe Clark	RCA Victor 21-0128	10
Sycamore Reel	RCA Victor 21-0128	10
Oh Dem Golden Slippers	RCA Victor 21-0129	10
Lucky Leather Breeches	RCA Victor 21-0129	7
Foolish Tears	RCA Victor 21-0150	2
Send Ten Pretty Flowers to My Girl in Tennessee	RCA Victor 21-0150	1
Texas Star, The	RCA Victor 21-0309	10
Pretty Please Love Me	RCA Victor 21-0309	1
Honky Tonkin'	RCA Victor 21-0330	1
Hillbilly Fever	RCA Victor 21-0330	7
Longing	RCA Victor 21-0348	2
Little Liza Lou	RCA Victor 21-0348	1
Longing	RCA Victor 21-0348	2
Tuesday Two Step	RCA Victor 21-0467	10

Table A-9: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Three Fiddle Rag	RCA Victor 21-0467	10
Chew Tobacco Rag	Decca 48310	7
Rhumba	Decca 46310	10
Lucky Leather Blues	Decca 46339	10
Hitsitty Hotsitty	Decca 46339	7
Horse Hair Boogie	Decca 46355	10
Down Yonder	Decca 46355	10
Cowboy Waltz	Decca 46376	1
My Heart is Broken in Three	Decca 46376	2
Crazy Cause I Love You	Decca 28253	3
Swingin' the Devil's Dream	Decca 28253	10
One Sweet Letter From You	Decca 28344	2
Carmen's Boogie	Decca 28344	10
Break Up Down	Decca 29309	10
You Clobbered Me	Decca 29309	7

Sources: Al Quaglieri, liner notes, Spadella: The Essential Spade Cooley, Columbia CD 57392, 1994; "Spade Cooley," Meet the Artist: Biographical Sketches of Leading Performing Artists With Listings of Their Recordings Of BMI-Licensed Songs, by BMI (New York: Broadcast Music, Inc., 1952) n.p.; The Billboard, various issues, 1946-1955.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-10: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Jimmie Davis, 1939-1945

Song	Release Number	Category*
What Good Will It Do	Decca 5666	3
Same Old Moon is Shining, The	Decca 5666	2
I'm Wondering Now	Decca 5675	2
I've Tried So Hard to Forget You	Decca 5687	2
If Tomorrow Never Comes	Decca 5687	3
Some Must Win Some Must Lose	Decca 5698	3
Down at the End of Memory Lane	Decca 5698	2
Dream of Love	Decca 5715	1
In My Heart You'll Always Be Mine	Decca 5715	2
Last Letter, The	Decca 5726	2
Born to Be Blue	Decca 5726	2
Last Trip of the Old Ship, The	Decca 5737	8
Leanin' on the Old Top Rail	Decca 5737	5
Never Break a Promise	Decca 5750	3
Two More Years (And I'll Be Free)	Decca 5750	5
Why Do You Treat Me Like Dirt Under Your Feet?	Decca 5766	2
Walls of White	Decca 5766	9
Why Should I Care?	Decca 5779	3
My Blue Heaven	Decca 5779	1
What Else Can I Do	Decca 5794	2
I'm Still a Fool Over You	Decca 5794	2
Your Promise Was Broken	Decca 5803	2
I'd Love to Call You Sweetheart	Decca 5803	2
You Are My Sunshine	Decca 5813	2
Old Timer	Decca 5813	7
Baby Your Mother (Like She Babied You)	Decca 5820	6
Roll Along, Kentucky Moon	Decca 5820	2
There's a Chill on the Hill Tonight	Decca 5830	2
My Mother's Bible	Decca 5830	6
It's Hard to Be True	Decca 5847	3
Why Should I Be to Blame	Decca 5847	3
Write a Letter to Your Mother	Decca 5858	6
I Feel the Same as You	Decca 5858	2
You're My Darling	Decca 5889	2
Love I Have For You, The	Decca 5889	3
On the Sunny Side of the Rockies	Decca 5902	8
Sweethearts or Strangers	Decca 5902	3
Some Other Man	Decca 5926	2
I'm Sorry Now	Decca 5926	4
There's an Old Fashioned House on a Hillside	Decca 5940	6
Too Late	Decca 5940	4
My Mary	Decca 5955	2

Table A-10: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
I'll Be True to the One I Love	Decca 5955	2
Prisoner's Song, The	Decca 5966	5
I Told You So	Decca 5966	3
I Hung My Head and Cried	Decca 5978	2
Just Because of You Little Girl	Decca 5978	5
I'm Knocking at Your Door Again	Decca 5989	2
Pay Me No Mind	Decca 5989	3
I Loved You Once	Decca 5999	3
Won't You Forgive Me	Decca 5999	2
I'm Thinking Tonight of Blue Eyes	Decca 6006	2
Sweetheart of the Valley	Decca 6006	8
Tears on My Pillow	Decca 6009	2
I Wish I Had a Sweetheart (Like that Old Sweetheart of Mine)	Decca 6009	2
What More Can I Say	Decca 6025	2
You'll Be Sorry	Decca 6025	3
All Because You Said Goodbye	Decca 6039	N/A
You're Breaking My Heart ('Cause You Don't Care)	Decca 6044	2
End of the World, The	Decca 6044	2
I've Got My Heart on My Sleeve	Decca 6053	2
Live and Let Live	Decca 6053	2
You Told Me a Lie	Decca 6062	2
Don't You Cry Over Me	Decca 6062	3
Where is My Boy Tonight	Decca 6065	8
Plant Some Flowers By My Grave	Decca 6065	8
I Dreamed of an Old Love Affair	Decca 6070	2
Sinner's Prayer, A	Decca 6070	9
Columbus Stockade Blues	Decca 6083	5
Walkin' My Blues Away	Decca 6083	7
There's a Chill on the Hill Tonight	Decca 6100	2
Is It Too Late Now?	Decca 6100	4
There's a New Moon Over My Shoulder	Decca 6105	2
Love Please Don't Let Me Down	Decca 6105	3

Source: Cary Ginell, The Decca Hillbilly Discography (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1989) 167-170.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-11: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Delmore Brothers, 1939-1945

Song	Release Number	Category*
Home on the River	Bluebird 8052	N/A
Baby, You're Throwing Me Down	Bluebird 8177	N/A
Don't Let My Ramblin' Bother Your Mind	Bluebird 8177	N/A
Wabash Blues	Bluebird 8204	5
Go Easy Mabel	Bluebird 8204	7
Gonna Lay Down My Old Guitar, Part 2	Bluebird 8215	3
I Loved You Better Than You Knew	Bluebird 8215	2
Brown's Ferry Blues, Part 3	Bluebird 8230	7
Gambler's Yodel	Bluebird 8230	2
Goin' Back to Georgia	Bluebird 8264	5
Wabash Cannonball Blues, The	Bluebird 8404	5
Scatterbrain Mama	Bluebird 8404	3
See That Coon in a Hickory Tree	Bluebird 8418	7
Back to Birmingham	Bluebird 8418	6
Over The Hills	Bluebird 8451	9
Dying Truckdriver, The	Bluebird 8451	6
Eastern Gate, The	Bluebird 8488	9
God Put a Rainbow in the Clouds	Bluebird 8488	9
Rainin' on the Mountain	Bluebird 8557	2
That's How I Feel, So Goodbye	Bluebird 8557	3
Happy on the Mississippi Shore	Bluebird 8613	6
Storms Are on the Ocean, The	Bluebird 8613	1
Honey I'm Ramblin' Away	Decca 46043	5
I'm Leavin' You	Decca 46043	5
Silver Dollar	Decca 5878	2
There's Trouble on My Mind Today	Decca 5878	2
Old Mountain Dew	Decca 5890	7
In the Blue Hills of Virginia	Decca 5890	6
Make Room in the Lifeboat for Me	Decca 5897	9
Gathering Flowers From the Hillside	Decca 5897	2
She Won't Be My Little Darling	Decca 5907	4
Broken Hearted Lover	Decca 5907	3
She Won't Be My Little Darling	Decca 5907	3
When It's Time for the Whip-Poor-Will to Sing	Decca 5925	2
Will You Be Lonesome Too?	Decca 5925	2
Precious Jewel	Decca 5970	8
Gospel Cannonball	Decca 5970	9
I Now Have a Bugle to Play	Decca 6000	8
Last Night I Was Your Only Darling	Decca 6000	3

Table A-11: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Baby Girl	Decca 6051	2
I Wonder Where My Darling Is Tonight	Decca 6051	4
New False Hearted Girl	Decca 6080	7
I'll Never Fall In Love Again	Decca 6080	3
Prisoner's Farewell	King 503	5
Sweet Sweet Thing	King 503	1
Last Old Shovel, The	King 509	8
Remember I Feel Lonesome Too	King 509	2
Why Did You Leave Me Dear	King 514	2
Midnight Special	King 514	7
Lonely Moon	King 518	2
Be My Little Pet	King 518	1
I Found An Angel	King 525	1
Fast Express	King 525	5

Source: Charles K. Wolfe, "Discography," *Truth is Stranger Than Publicity*, by Alton Delmore (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1995) 304-307.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-12: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Delmore Brothers, 1946-1952

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
I'm Sorry I Caused You to Cry	King 527	2
Hillbilly Boogie	King 527	7
I'm Lonesome Without You	King 533	1
She Left Me Standing On the Mountain	King 533	2
Don't Forget Me	King 548	1
Midnight Train	King 548	5
Somebody Else's Darling	King 570	2
Freight Train Boogie	King 570	7
Mississippi Shore	King 592	6
Brown's Ferry Blues	King 592	7
Boogie Woogie Baby	King 599	7
Born to be Blue	King 599	2
Rounder's Blues	King 643	5
Harmonica Blues	King 643	7
Used Car Blues	King 664	7
Barnyard Boogie	King 664	7
Waitin' For that Train	King 680	1
Mobile Boogie	King 680	6
Darby's Ram	King 708	7
Take It On Out the Door	King 708	7
Take it to the Captain	King 718	5
Peach Tree Street Boogie	King 718	7
Fifty Miles to Travel	King 739	5
Now I'm Free	King 739	3
Shame On Me	King 751	3
Stop That Boogie	King 751	7
Wrath of God, The	King 769	9
Calling to That Other Shore	King 769	9
Weary Day	King 784	2
Down Home Boogie	King 784	10
Going Back to the Blue Ridge Mountains	King 803	3
Blues Stay Away From Me	King 803	2
Pan American Boogie	King 826	6
Trouble Ain't Nothin' but the Blues	King 826	2
Sand Mountain Blues	King 849	2
I Swear By the Stars	King 849	2
Someday You'll Pay	King 873	3
My Heart Will Be Cryin'	King 873	8
Life's Too Short	King 911	3

Table A-12: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Blues You Never Lose	King 911	2
I Let the Freight Train Carry Me On	King 927	5
Please Be My Sunshine	King 927	1
Gotta Have Some Lovin'	King 935	3
Field Hand Man	King 935	5
Lonesome Day	King 946	8
Everybody Loves Her	King 946	7
Who's Gonna Be Lonesome For Me	King 966	2
Tennessee Choo Choo	King 966	6
I Want a Home in Dixie	King 974	6
Girl By the River, The	King 981	2
There's Sumpin' About Love	King 981	7
Kentucky Mountain	King 1005	8
Heartbreak Ridge	King 1005	8
I'll Be There	King 1023	1
Steamboat Bill Boogie	King 1023	7
I Won't Be Worried Long	King 1053	3
Good Time Saturday Night	King 1053	1
Got No Way of Knowing	King 1084	2
Muddy Water	King 1084	4
How You Gonna Get Your Lovin'	King 1113	3
I Said Goodnight to My Darling	King 1113	2
That Old Train	King 1141	6
I Needed You	King 1141	2
Trail of Time, The	King 1158	2
Whatcha Gonna Gimme	King 1158	7

Source: Charles K. Wolfe, "Discography," Truth is Stranger Than Publicity (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1995) 307-318.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-13: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Tommy Duncan, 1949-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
I'm Thru Wastin' Time on You	Capitol 15381	3
Worried over You	Capitol 15381	2
September	Capitol 40178	1
Gamblin' Polka Dot Blues	Capitol 40178	7
You Put Me on My Feet (When You Took Her Off My Hands)	Capitol 40247	3
Just a Plain Old Country Boy	Capitol 40247	6
Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy	Capitol 40282	7
Never No' Mo' Blues	Capitol 40282	5
I Don't Believe You're Mine Anymore.	Capitol 895	2
In the Jailhouse Now	Capitol 895	7
All Star Boogie	Natural 8101	10
High Country	Natural 8101	6
Sick, Sober, and Sorry	Intro 6013	7
Mississippi River Blues	Intro 6013	6
There's Not a Cow in Texas	Intro 6018	7
See Who's Sorry Now	Intro 6018	3
Wrong Road Home Blues	Intro 6026	7
My Sweet Wildflower	Intro 6026	1
Sweet Mama Hurry Home or I'll Be Gone	Intro 6027	2
I'm Suing You	Intro 6027	7
Jesus is Mine	Intro 6029	9
Take Your Burden to the Lord	Intro 6029	9
California Waltz	Intro 6030	1
Got a Letter From My Kid Today	Intro 6030	6
Relax and Take It Easy	Intro 6037	7
Move a Little Closer	Intro 6037	7
I Was Just Walking Out the Door	Intro 6049	3
I've Turned a Gadabout	Intro 6049	7
Gossip Song, The	Intro 6054	1
Nancy Jane	Intro 6054	7
I Don't Want to Hurt You	Intro 6059	3
Who Drank My Beer (While I Was In the Rear)	Intro 6059	7
Excuse Me, I Gotta Go	Intro 6060	3
Tomato Can	Intro 6060	7
Where Oh Where Has My Little Love Gone	Intro 6065	7
Beneath a Neon Star in Honky Tonk	Intro 6065	1
Hound Dog	Intro 6071	3
It May Take A Long, Long Time	Intro 6073	3
Grits and Gravy Blues	Intro 6073	7

Table A-13: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Stars Over San Antone	Intro 6080	2
I Reckon I'm a Texan	Intro 6080	6
Tennessee Churchbells	Intro 6086	2
That Certain Feeling	Intro 6086	3
Leavin' Today	Coral 61321	3
My Son, My Son	Coral 61321	6
Time Changes Everything	Coral 61391	3
San Antonio Rose	Coral 61391	2
Parting of the Ways, The	Coral 64173	2
Wastin' Your Life Away	Coral 64173	3
I Just Can't Take It Any More	Coral 64182	3
Walkin' in the Shadow of the Blues	Coral 64182	2

Sources: Steve Hathaway, et. al, "Tommy Duncan—The Discography, 1949-July 24, 1951," Texas Moon, Bear Family CD BCD 15907, 1996; Steve Hathaway, et. al, "Tommy Duncan—The Discography, July 31, 1951-March 16, 1953 and March 1956," Beneath a Neon Star in a Honky Tonk, Bear Family CD BCD 15957, 1996; The Billboard, various issues, 1953-1955.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-14: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Bob Dunn's Vagabonds, 1939-1940

Song	Release Number	Category*
Too Long	Decca 5667	3
Mama's Gone Goodbye	Decca 5667	10
Blue Skies	Decca 5676	1
Toodle-Oodle-Oo	Decca 5676	7
When Night Falls	Decca 5684	1
You Don't Know My Mind	Decca 5684	3
It Must Be Love	Decca 5694	1
Mean Mistreater	Decca 5694	3
I Want the Whole World to Know I Love You	Decca 5707	1
Graveyard Blues	Decca 5707	7
You'll Pay Some Day	Decca 5733	3
Basin Street Blues	Decca 5733	6
Was That All I Meant to You	Decca 5746	2
Sweet Bunch Of Daises	Decca 5746	10
Wednesday Rag	Decca 5772	10
Stompin' At the Honky Tonk	Decca 5772	10
I'll Tell the World (She's A Good Little Girl)	Decca 5789	1
Meet Me Tonight in Dreams	Decca 5789	2
I'll Forget Dear (That I Ever Loved You)	Decca 5828	2
Juke Box Rag	Decca 5828	10
I Found You Out When I Found You In	Decca 5848	3
Marcheta	Decca 5848	10
I'll Get By (As Long As I Have You)	Decca 5868	1
'Round Her Neck She Wears a Yellow Ribbon	Decca 5868	8

Source: Cary Ginell, The Decca Hillbilly Discography (Westport: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1989) 174.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-15: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Flatt and Scruggs, 1948-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
God Loves His Children	Mercury 6161	9
I'm Going to Make Heaven My Home	Mercury 6161	9
We'll Meet Again Sweetheart	Mercury 6181	8
My Cabin in Caroline	Mercury 6181	6
Baby Blue Eyes	Mercury 6200	2
Bouquet in Heaven	Mercury 6200	6
Down the Road	Mercury 6211	1
Why Don't You Tell Me So?	Mercury 6211	2
I'll Never Shed Another Tear	Mercury 6230	3
I'll Be Going to Heaven Sometime	Mercury 6230	9
No Mother or Dad	Mercury 6247	6
Foggy Mountain Breakdown	Mercury 6247	10
Is It Too Late Now?	Mercury 6268	2
So Happy I'll Be	Mercury 6268	9
My Little Girl in Tennessee	Mercury 6287	5
I'll Never Love Another	Mercury 6287	2
Cora is Gone	Mercury 6302	2
Pain in My Heart	Mercury 6317	2
Take Me in a Lifeboat	Mercury 6317	9
Doin' My Time	Mercury 6333	5
Farewell Blues	Mercury 6333	10
Roll in my Sweet Baby's Arms	Mercury 6372	7
I'll Just Pretend	Mercury 6372	2
Pike County Breakdown	Mercury 6396	10
Old Salty Dog Blues	Mercury 6396	7
Preachin', Prayin', Singin'	Mercury 70016	9
Will the Roses Bloom (Where She Lies Sleeping)	Mercury 70016	8
Back to the Cross	Mercury 70064	9
Come Back Little Darling	Columbia 20777	2
I'm Waiting For You to Call Me Darling	Columbia 20777	2
I'm Head Over Heels in Love	Columbia 20805	2
We Can't Be Darlings Anymore	Columbia 20805	2
Jimmie Brown, the Newsboy	Columbia 20830	6
Somehow Tonight	Columbia 20830	2
Don't Get Above Your Raising	Columbia 20854	3
'Tis Sweet to Be Remembered	Columbia 20886	1
Earl's Breakdown	Columbia 20886	10
Get in Line Brother	Columbia 20915	9
Brother, I'm Getting Ready to Go	Columbia 20915	9

Table A-15: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Old Home Town, The	Columbia 20957	6
I'll Stay Around	Columbia 20957	3
Over the Hills to the Poorhouse	Columbia 21002	6
My Darling's Last Goodbye	Columbia 21002	8
I'm Gonna Settle Down	Columbia 21043	1
I'm Lonesome and Blue	Columbia 21043	2
Flint Hill Special	Columbia 21054	10
Dim Lights, Thick Smoke,	Columbia 21054	6
Why did You Wander?	Columbia 21091	2
Thinking About You	Columbia 21091	8
If I Should Wander Back Tonight	Columbia 21125	5
Dear Old Dixie	Columbia 21125	10
I'm Working On a Road	Columbia 21147	9
He Took Your Place	Columbia 21147	9
I'll Go Stepping Too	Columbia 21179	3
Foggy Mountain Chimes	Columbia 21179	10
Mother Prays Loud in Her Sleep	Columbia 21209	6
Be Ready For Tomorrow May Never Come	Columbia 21209	9
I'd Rather Be Alone	Columbia 21248	3
Someone Took My Place With You	Columbia 21248	3
You're Not a Drop in the Bucket	Columbia 21295	1
Foggy Mountain Special	Columbia 21295	10
Till the End of the World Rolls Around	Columbia 21334	1
Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky	Columbia 21334	3
I've Lost You	Columbia 29854	2
Reunion in Heaven	Okeh 18004	9
Pray for the Boys	Okeh 18004	8

Sources: Neil V. Rosenberg, "The Flatt and Scruggs Discography: The Mercury Sessions, 1948-1950," *Journal of Country Music* Vol. 12, No. 3 (1989): 47-48; Neil V. Rosenberg, "The Flatt and Scruggs Discography: The Columbia Recordings, 1950-1959," *Journal of Country Music* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1990): 42-43.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-16: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Red Foley, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
My Poor Little Heart Is Broken	Decca 9008	2
Harriat	Decca 9008	7
Atomic Power	Decca 46014	8
Have I Told You Lately That I Love You	Decca 46014	1
Foggy River	Decca 46024	2
Lay Down Your Soul	Decca 46024	9
Rye Whiskey	Decca 46028	7
That's How Much I Love You	Decca 46028	1
New Jolie Blonde	Decca 46034	7
Pillow Of Sighs and Tears, A	Decca 46034	2
Freight Train Boogie	Decca 46035	7
Rockin' Chair Money	Decca 46035	1
Honey, Be My Honey Bee	Decca 46052	1
Old Shep	Decca 46052	6
I'll Be True to You My Darlin'	Decca 46058	2
Too Many Blues	Decca 46058	2
Love to You is Just a Game	Decca 46068	3
Open Up That Door	Decca 46068	2
Smile Will Chase Away a Tear, A	Decca 46074	6
Never Trust a Woman	Decca 46074	7
Back to Tennessee	Decca 46081	6
Easy to Please	Decca 46081	1
Everybody's Gonna Have A Wonderful Time Up There	Decca 46115	9
Ride On King Jesus	Decca 46115	9
I'm Picking Up the Pieces of a Broken Heart	Decca 46123	2
Last Thing I Want is Your Pity, The	Decca 46123	2
Ruby Red Lips	Decca 46124	2
Television	Decca 46124	7
Don't Make Me Go to Bed and I'll Be Good	Decca 46126	8
I'm Waltzing With a Broken Heart	Decca 46126	2
Blues In My Heart	Decca 46136	2
Tennessee Saturday Night	Decca 46136	7
Just a Man and His Dog	Decca 46143	9
Tit for Tat	Decca 46143	3
Tennessee Border	Decca 46151	1
Candy Kisses	Decca 46151	2
There's A Light Guiding Me	Decca 46158	9
Cleanse Me	Decca 46158	9
Two Cents, Three Eggs and a Postcard	Decca 46165	7
I Wish I Had a Nickel	Decca 46165	3
Tennessee Polka	Decca 46170	7
I'm Throwing Rice (At the Girl I Love)	Decca 46170	2

Table A-16: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Here Come Santa Claus	Decca 46185	7
Our Christmas Waltz	Decca 46185	1
Every Step of the Way	Decca 46197	1
Sunday Down in Tennessee	Decca 46197	6
Tennessee Border, Nol 2	Decca 46200	7
Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age	Decca 46200	7
Careless Kisses	Decca 46201	3
I Gotta Have My Baby Back	Decca 46201	4
Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy	Decca 46205	7
Sugarfoot Rag	Decca 46205	7
Church Music	Decca 46206	2
Have I Told You Lately That I Love You	Decca 46206	1
Choc'late Ice Cream Cone	Decca 46234	7
Birmingham Bounce	Decca 46234	7
Let's Go to Church Next Sunday Morning	Decca 46235	1
Remember Me	Decca 46235	1
Old Kentucky Fox Chase	Decca 46241	7
M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I	Decca 46241	7
Hillbilly Fever, No. 2	Decca 46255	7
Goodnight Irene	Decca 46255	7
Somebody's Cryin'	Decca 46261	2
Cincinnati Dancing Pig	Decca 46261	7
Frosty the Snowman	Decca 46267	7
Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer	Decca 46267	7
Dear Little Girls	Decca 46277	8
I Won't Be Home	Decca 46277	8
Texas Vs. Kentucky	Decca 46278	7
Lovebug Itch, The	Decca 46278	7
Music By the Angels	Decca 46285	6
Some Else Not Me	Decca 46285	2
Smoke on the Water, Number Two	Decca 46286	8
Hot Rod Race	Decca 46286	7
That Little Boy of Mine	Decca 46294	6
Don't Make Me Go to Bed and I'll Be Good	Decca 46294	8
So Long (It's Been Good to Know You)	Decca 46297	7
Chicken Song, The	Decca 46297	7
Hobo Boogie	Decca 46304	7
Heska-Holka	Decca 46304	7
Strange Little Girl, The	Decca 46311	6
Kentucky Waltz	Decca 46311	2
Tennessee Hillbilly Ghost	Decca 46317	7
Giles County, Pulaski Post Office	Decca 46317	7

Table A-16: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Old Soldiers Never Die	Decca 46319	8
Cock-A-Doodle-Do	Decca 46319	7
Sugarfoot Rag Square Dance	Decca 46349	10
Jesus and the Atheist	Decca 46357	9
Weapon of Prayer, The	Decca 46357	8
I'm in Love With Molly	Decca 46387	7
Too Old to Cut the Mustard	Decca 46387	7
Steal Away	Decca 14505	9
Just a Closer Walk With Thee	Decca 14505	9
When God Dips His Love in My Heart	Decca 14522	9
Will the Circle Be Unbroken	Decca 14522	9
Our Lady of Fatima	Decca 14526	9
Rosary, The	Decca 14526	9
I Hear A Choir	Decca 14537	9
Place Where I Worship, The	Decca 14537	9
He'll Understand and Say Well Done	Decca 14553	9
Milky White Way	Decca 14553	9
He Bought My Soul at Calvary	Decca 14566	9
It is No Secret	Decca 14566	9
(There'll Be) Peace in the Valley (For Me)	Decca 14573	9
Who Could I Go to But to the Lord	Decca 14573	9
Tater Pie	Decca 27378	7
My Heart Cries for You	Decca 27378	2
Crawdad Song	Decca 27599	7
Idle Rumors	Decca 27599	8
Satins and Lace	Decca 27609	7
I Want to Be With You Always	Decca 27609	1
If I'd A-Knowed, You Could Have Goed	Decca 27763	3
Night Train to Memphis	Decca 27763	1
Alabama Jubilee	Decca 27810	7
Dixie	Decca 27810	6
Say a Little Prayer	Decca 27836	9
(There'll Be) Peace in the Valley	Decca 27836	9
Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf	Decca 27929	7
Whistle While You Work	Decca 27929	7
Salty Dog Rag	Decca 27981	7
Milk Bucket Boogie	Decca 27981	7
I'm Bound for the Kingdom	Decca 28147	9
I'd Rather Have Jesus	Decca 28147	9
Hang Your Head in Shame	Decca 28163	3
Where is Your Wandering Mother Tonight	Decca 28163	6
(The Angels are Lighting) God's Little Candles	Decca 28252	9

Table A-16: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Something Bigger Than You and I	Decca 28252	9
Kisses on Paper	Decca 28288	2
Are You Trying To Tell Me Goodbye	Decca 28288	3
I Gotta Have You	Decca 28343	2
Don't Believe Everything You Hear	Decca 28343	3
Midnight	Decca 28420	2
Deep Blues	Decca 28420	2
Mocking Bird, The	Decca 28447	9
My God is Real	Decca 28447	9
Sally	Decca 28460	1
Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes	Decca 28460	1
Blue Letter	Decca 28567	2
Slaves of a Hopeless Love Affair	Decca 28567	4
Hot Toddy	Decca 28587	7
Playin' Dominoes and Shootin' Dice	Decca 28587	7
No Help Wanted, No. 2	Decca 28634	7
You're a Real Good Friend	Decca 28634	7
I Believe	Decca 28694	9
Mansion on a Hilltop	Decca 28694	9
I'm Sorry We Met	Decca 28695	2
Treasure Untold	Decca 28695	1
Hot Dog Rag	Decca 28759	7
That Old River Line	Decca 28759	7
Baby Blues	Decca 28767	7
Unless You're Free	Decca 28767	3
Keys to the Kingdom	Decca 28796	9
Last Mile of the Way, The	Decca 28796	9
Shake a Hand	Decca 28839	9
Stranded in Deep Water	Decca 28839	2
Too Old to Tango	Decca 28911	7
Dr. Ketchum	Decca 28911	7
Gentle Carpenter of Bethlehem	Decca 28940	9
Put Christ Back in Christmas	Decca 28940	9
Goodbye, Bobby Boy	Decca 28944	8
Peace of Mind	Decca 28944	9
As Far As I'm Concerned	Decca 29000	1
Tennessee Whistling Man	Decca 29000	7
Consideration	Decca 29044	9
Robe of Calvary	Decca 29044	9
One By One	Decca 29065	4
I'm a Stranger in My Home	Decca 29065	3
Jilted	Decca 29100	3

Table A-16: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Pin Ball Boogie	Decca 29100	7
Lady of Guadalupe	Decca 29159	9
My Friend	Decca 29159	9
Double Datin'	Decca 29195	7
It's the Mileage that's Slowin' us Down	Decca 29195	7
Bury Me Beneath the Willow	Decca 29222	2
She'll Never Know	Decca 29222	2
Thank You for Calling	Decca 29228	2
Skinnie Minnie (Fishtail)	Decca 29228	7
Looking Glass	Decca 29339	2
Walkin' in the Cold Cold Rain	Decca 29339	4
Hearts of Stone	Decca 29375	3
Never	Decca 29375	1
As Long As I Live	Decca 29390	2
Makin' Believe	Decca 29390	2
Hominy Grits	Decca 29494	7
Nobody	Decca 29494	4
Strange Things Are Happening Every Day	Decca 29505	9
Have a Little Talk With Jesus	Decca 29505	9
You Little So and So	Decca 29517	3
Just Call Me Lonesome	Decca 29626	2
Blue Guitar	Decca 29626	2
When You Come to the End of the Day	Decca 29667	6
Sweet Kentucky Rose	Decca 29704	1
You and Me	Decca 29740	1
No One But You	Decca 29740	1
Someone to Care	Decca 29775	9
I See God	Decca 29775	9
Hoot Owl Boogie, The	Decca 29894	7
Handful of Rice, A	Decca 29894	2
One Life, Two Loves (and Three Broken Hearts)	Decca 30249	2

Source: MCA/Decca Master Sheets, Country Music Foundation, Nashville.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-17: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Tennessee Ernie Ford, 1949-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
I've Got the Milk 'em in the Morning Blues	Capitol 15400	7
Tennessee Border	Capitol 15400	1
Country Junction	Capitol 15430	7
Philadelphia Lawyer	Capitol 15430	6
Smokey Mountain Boogie	Capitol 40212	7
You'll Find Her Name Written There	Capitol 40212	8
Mule Train	Capitol 40258	7
Anticipation Blues	Capitol 40258	7
Donkey Serenade, The	Capitol 40280	7
Cry of the Wild Goose, The	Capitol 40280	5
My Hobby	Capitol 985	7
I Got the Feed 'em in the Morning Blues	Capitol 985	7
I'll Never Be Free	Capitol 1124	2
Ain't Nobody's Business But My Own	Capitol 1124	7
Lord's Lariat, The	Capitol 1159	9
What This Country Needs	Capitol 1159	9
Cincinnati Dancing Pig	Capitol 1174	7
Bright Lights and Blonde-Haired Women	Capitol 1174	6
Leetle Juan Pedro	Capitol 1275	7
Shot Gun Boogie, The	Capitol 1295	7
I Ain't Gonna Let it Happen No More	Capitol 1295	7
Tailor Made Woman	Capitol 1349	7
Stack-O-Lee	Capitol 1349	7
Kentucky Waltz	Capitol 1470	2
Strange Little Girl, The	Capitol 1470	6
She's My Baby	Capitol 1521	7
Mr. and Mississippi	Capitol 1521	5
Oceans of Tears	Capitol 1567	3
You're My Sugar	Capitol 1567	7
Woman is a Five Letter Word	Capitol 1775	7
Kissin' Bug Boogie	Capitol 1775	7
Cool, Cool Kisses	Capitol 1809	7
Hey Good Lookin'	Capitol 1809	1
A-Rootin' Tootin' Santa Claus	Capitol 1830	7
Christmas Dinner	Capitol 1830	7
Rock City Boogie	Capitol 1911	7
Streamlined Cannonball	Capitol 1911	6
Candy Dancer's Ball, The	Capitol 2017	7
Hambone	Capitol 2017	7

Table A-17: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Everybody's Got a Girl But Me	Capitol 2042	2
Put Your Arms Around Me	Capitol 2042	5
Snowshoe Thompson	Capitol 2066	7
Fatback, Louisiana, U.S.A.	Capitol 2066	6
Blackberry Boogie	Capitol 2170	7
Tennessee Local	Capitol 2170	6
I'm Hog Tied Over You	Capitol 2215	1
False-Hearted Girl	Capitol 2215	3
Sweet Temptation	Capitol 2338	7
I Don't Know	Capitol 2338	3
Three Things (A Man Must Do)	Capitol 2443	6
Hey, Mr. Cotton Picker	Capitol 2443	7
Don't Start Courtin' in a Hot Rod	Capitol 2473	7
We're a Growin' Up	Capitol 2473	7
Catfish Boogie	Capitol 2602	7
Kiss Me Big	Capitol 2602	7
Honeymoon's Over, The	Capitol 2809	7
This Must Be the Place	Capitol 2809	7
Give Me Your Word	Capitol 2810	1
River of No Return	Capitol 2810	2
Eins, Zwei, Drei	Capitol 2876	7
Losing You	Capitol 2876	2
Something Bigger Than You and I	Capitol 2939	9
There is Beauty in Everything	Capitol 2939	6

Sources: The Billboard, various issues, 1949-1955; Rich Kienzle, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Masters (Nashville: Liberty Records, 1994) 30-38.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-18: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Lefty Frizzell, 1950-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
I Love You a Thousand Ways	Columbia 20739	1
If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time	Columbia 20739	7
Shine, Shave, Shower (It's Saturday)	Columbia 20772	7
Look What Thoughts Will Do	Columbia 20772	3
I Want to Be With You Always	Columbia 20799	1
My Baby's Just Like Money	Columbia 20799	3
Give Me More, More, More (Of Your Kisses)	Columbia 20885	7
How Long Will It Take (To Stop Loving You)	Columbia 20885	1
Always Late (With Your Kisses)	Columbia 20837	3
Mom and Dad's Waltz	Columbia 20837	6
Treasure Untold	Columbia 20840	1
Blue Yodel #6	Columbia 20842	2
Travellin' Blues	Columbia 20842	3
My Old Pal	Columbia 20841	6
Blue Yodel #2	Columbia 20840	5
Lullaby Yodel	Columbia 20843	6
Brakeman's Blues	Columbia 20841	5
My Rough and Rowdy Ways	Columbia 20843	5
Don't Stay Away (Till Love Grows Cold)	Columbia 20911	1
It's Just You (I Could Love You Always)	Columbia 20950	1
(Darling Now) You're Here So Everything's Alright	Columbia 20911	1
If You Can Spare the Time (I Won't Miss the Money)	Columbia 20950	1
A King Without a Queen	Columbia 21241	2
Forever (and Always)	Columbia 20997	2
I Know You're Lonesome (While Waiting for Me)	Columbia 20997	1
I'm an Old, Old Man (Tryin' to Love While I Can)	Columbia 21034	7
You're Just Mine (Only in My Dreams)	Columbia 21034	2
(Honey, Baby, Hurry) Bring Your Sweet Self Back to Me	Columbia 21084	1
Time Changes Things	Columbia 21084	2
California Blues (Blue Yodel #4)	Columbia 21102	5
Never No Mo' Blues	Columbia 21101	5
We Crucified Our Jesus	Columbia 21118	9
When It Comes to Measuring Love	Columbia 21118	6
Sleep Baby Sleep	Columbia 21101	6
(I'm) Lonely and Blue	Columbia 21102	2
Before You Go, Make Sure You Know	Columbia 21142	2
Two Friends of Mine In Love	Columbia 21142	6
Hopeless Love	Columbia 21169	2
Then I'll Come Back to You	Columbia 21169	3

Table A-18: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Two Hearts Broken Now	Columbia 21284	4
You Can Always Count on Me	Columbia 21241	1
I've Been Away Way Too Long	Columbia 21208	1
Run 'Em Off	Columbia 21194	7
The Darkest Moment (Is Just Before the Light of Day)	Columbia 21194	1
You're Too Late	Columbia 21284	2
My Little Her and Him	Columbia 21208	6
I Love You Mostly	Columbia 21328	1
Mama!	Columbia 21328	7

Source: Richard Weize, "Lefty Frizzell—The Columbia and ABC Discography,"
Lefty Frizzell: Life's Like Poetry, by Charles K. Wolfe (Vollersode: Bear
 Family Records, 1992) 138-141.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-19: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Jim and Jesse, 1951-1952

Song	Release Number	Category*
I'll Wash Your Love From My Heart	Capitol 2233	3
Are You Missing Me	Capitol 2233	2
I Will Always Be Waiting For You	Capitol 2365	2
Purple Heart	Capitol 2365	8
Virginia Waltz	Capitol 2476	2
Air Mail Special	Capitol 2476	6
My Darling's in Heaven	Capitol 2578	8
Is It True	Capitol 2578	2
Just Wondering Why	Capitol 2683	2
My Little Honeysuckle Rose	Capitol 2683	1
Are You Lost in Sin	Capitol 2798	9
Look For Me (I'll Be There)	Capitol 2798	9
Too Many Tears	Capitol 3141	3
Memory of You, A	Capitol 3141	8

Source: Richard Weize, "Jim and Jesse—The Capitol Discography," Jim and Jesse, 1952-1955, Bear Family CD BCD 15635, 1992.

Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-20: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Johnnie and Jack, 1947-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Sing Tom Kitty	Apollo 142	7
Jole Blon	Apollo 142	7
Love in the First Degree	Apollo 147	3
Too Many Blues	Apollo 147	2
This is the End	Apollo 154	2
Paper Boy	Apollo 154	6
Lord Watch Over My Daddy	Apollo 177	8
There's No Housing Shortage in Heaven	Apollo 177	9
What About You?	RCA Victor 21-0026	3
Pray Together and We'll Stay Together	RCA Victor 21-0026	9
She Went With a Smile	RCA Victor 21-0061	6
Trials and Tribulations	RCA Victor 21-0061	9
Just When I Needed You	RCA Victor 21-0106	2
Buried Alive	RCA Victor 21-0106	8
For Old Times Sake	RCA Victor 21-0153	3
I Heard My Savior Call	RCA Victor 21-0153	9
Too Much Sinning	RCA Victor 21-0314	9
Jesus Hits Like An Atom Bomb	RCA Victor 21-0314	9
Shout	RCA Victor 21-0323	9
Too Far From God	RCA Victor 21-0323	9
You Better Get Down on Your Knees & Pray	RCA Victor 21-0324	9
Jesus Remembered Me	RCA Victor 21-0324	9
Poison Love	RCA Victor 21-0377	3
Lonesome	RCA Victor 21-0377	2
Smile on My Lips, A	RCA Victor 21-0415	2
I Can't Tell My Heart That	RCA Victor 21-0415	2
I'm Gonna Love You One More Time	RCA Victor 21-0448	3
Take My Ring From Your Finger	RCA Victor 21-0448	3
Cryin' Heart Blues	RCA Victor 21-0478	2
How Can I Believe In You	RCA Victor 21-0478	3
Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide	RCA Victor 20-4251	3
Humming Bird	RCA Victor 20-4251	6
You Tried to Ruin My Name	RCA Victor 20-4389	3
Ashes of Love	RCA Victor 20-4389	2
Three Ways of Knowing	RCA Victor 20-4555	3
When You Want a Little Lovin'	RCA Victor 20-4555	2
Slow Poison	RCA Victor 20-4765	3
Heart Trouble	RCA Victor 20-4765	2
You Can't Fool God	RCA Victor 20-4878	9
Shake My Mother's Hand for Me	RCA Victor 20-4878	6
Two Timing Blues	RCA Victor 20-4949	2
I've Gone and Done it Again	RCA Victor 20-4949	1

Table A-20: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Don't Let the Stars Get In Your Eyes	RCA Victor 20-5040	1
Only One I Ever Lost, The	RCA Victor 20-5040	2
I'll Live With God (to Die No More)	RCA Victor 20-5098	9
Eastern Gate, The	RCA Victor 20-5098	9
Just for Tonight	RCA Victor 20-5164	1
Hank Williams Will Live Forever	RCA Victor 20-5164	8
South in New Orleans	RCA Victor 20-5290	1
Winner of Your Heart, The	RCA Victor 20-5290	1
Don't Say Goodbye If You Love Me	RCA Victor 20-5375	2
Private Property	RCA Victor 20-5375	7
When the Savior Reached Down for Me	RCA Victor 20-5427	9
Angels Rock Me to Sleep	RCA Victor 20-5427	9
You're My Downfall	RCA Victor 20-5483	3
Pig Latin Serenade	RCA Victor 20-5483	7
From the Manger to the Cross	RCA Victor 20-5517	9
God Put a Rainbow in the Clouds	RCA Victor 20-5517	9
Love Trap	RCA Victor 20-5581	7
Cheated Out of Love	RCA Victor 20-5581	2
You've Got Me in Your Power	RCA Victor 20-5635	2
Dynamite Kisses	RCA Victor 20-5635	1
But I Love You Just the Same	RCA Victor 20-5649	7
Borrowed Diamonds	RCA Victor 20-5649	2
(Oh Baby Mine) I Get So Lonely	RCA Victor 20-5681	2
You're Just What the Doctor Ordered	RCA Victor 20-5681	1
Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight	RCA Victor 20-5775	1
Honey, I Need You	RCA Victor 20-5775	2
Kiss Crazy Baby	RCA Victor 20-5880	1
Beware Of It	RCA Victor 20-5880	7
S.O.S.	RCA Victor 20-6295	2
Pleasure Not a Habit in Mexico	RCA Victor 20-6847	7
All the Time	RCA Victor 20-6857	1

Source: Eddie Stubbs and Richard Weize, "The Discography," Johnnie and Jack and The Tennessee Mountain Boys, by Eddie Stubbs and Walt Trott (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 46-47.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-21: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Grandpa Jones, 1946-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Eight More Miles to Louisville	King 532	6
Get Things Ready for Me, Ma	King 545	6
Darling Won't You Love Me Now	King 575	N/A
Heart Stealin' Mama	King 575	7
Are There Tears Behind Your Smiles	King 587	2
Ridin' on That Train	King 587	5
Get Back on the Glory Road	King 601	9
She's Gone and Left Another Broken Heart	King 601	2
My Darling's Not My Darling Anymore	King 624	2
Mountain Dew	King 624	7
Call Me Darling Once Again	King 644	2
Alimony Trouble	King 644	7
Move it On Over	King 665	7
Mountain Maw	King 668	7
Old Rattler	King 668	7
Going Down the Country	King 685	6
New Pins and Needles	King 685	2
I Often Wonder Why You Changed Your Mind	King 694	2
I'm My Own Grandpa	King 694	7
Darby's Ram	King 708	7
Take it on Out the Door	King 708	7
I'm On My Way Somewhere	King 717	7
Bald Headed End of the Broom, The	King 717	7
I Guess You Don't Remember Me	King 733	2
Old Rattler's Treed Again	King 733	7
My Old Red River Home	King 740	6
How Many Biscuits Can You Eat?	King 740	7
144 Thousand Were There	King 747	9
That Depot in the Sky	King 747	9
Kitty Clyde	King 772	1
Going Down Town	King 772	7
You'll Make Our Shack a Mansion	King 794	6
I Ain't Got Much to Lose	King 794	3
Weary Lonesome Me	King 812	2
Grandpa Boogie	King 812	7
Jonah and the Whale	King 815	9
Daisy Dean	King 834	1
My Little Nagging Wife	King 834	7
Mule Train	King 835	7

Table A-21: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Feudin' Boogie, The	King 835	7
Are You From Dixie?	King 847	6
Jesse James	King 847	5
Uncle Eph's Got the Coon	King 867	7
Five String Banjo Boogie	King 867	7
Our Fathers had Religion	King 875	9
Grandpa's Getting Married Again	King 890	7
I Don't Know Gee From Haw	King 890	7
Dark as a Dungeon	King 896	5
Come and Dine	King 896	9
Stay in the Wagonyard	King 912	7
Melinda	King 912	7
Golden Rocket, The	King 930	3
Jennie, Get Your Hoe Cakes Done	King 930	7
Trouble, Trouble, Trouble	King 934	N/A
Send in Your Name and Address	King 934	N/A
I'm Hog Wild Crazy Over You	King 948	1
Nobody Loves Me Anymore	King 948	7
Chicken Don't Roost Too High	King 976	7
What'll I Do With My Baby	King 976	7
Happy Little Home in Arkansas	King 992	6
Rain is Still Falling, The	King 992	2
You Done Me Mean and Hateful	King 1029	2
That Memphis Train	King 1029	5
Time, Time, Time, Time	King 1061	2
Down in Dixie	King 1061	6
Fifteen Cents is All I Got	King 1069	7
Fix Me a Pallet	King 1069	5
There's a Hole in the Ground	King 1097	9
Light in His Soul	King 1097	9
Come Be My Rainbow	King 1301	1
Mountain Laurel	RCA Victor 20-4505	1
Retreat (Cries My Heart)	RCA Victor 20-4505	7
Stop That Ticklin' Me	RCA Victor 20-4660	7
T.V. Blues	RCA Victor 20-4660	7
I'm No Communist	RCA Victor 20-4771	8
Pickin' on Me	RCA Victor 20-4771	7
Sass-a-Frass	RCA Victor 20-4956	7
Closer to the Bone, The (The Sweeter is the Meat)	RCA Victor 20-4956	7

Table A-21: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Dear Old Sunny South By the Sea	RCA Victor 20-5113	6
Old Rattler's Son	RCA Victor 20-5113	7
Bread and Gravy	RCA Victor 20-5234	8
Pap's Corn Likker Still	RCA Victor 20-5234	7
You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet	RCA Victor 20-5357	7
You're Never Too Old For Love	RCA Victor 20-5357	7
My Heart is Like a Train	RCA Victor 20-5475	7
That New Vitamine	RCA Victor 20-5475	7
You All Come	RCA Victor 20-5576	7
Trader, The	RCA Victor 20-5576	7
Old Rattler	RCA Victor 20-5648	7
Some More Mountain Dew	RCA Victor 20-5685	7
Old Blue	RCA Victor 20-5685	7
Lookin' Back to See	RCA Victor 20-5770	N/A
Standing in the Depot	RCA Victor 20-5789	5
High Silk Hat and a Gold Top Walking Cane	RCA Victor 20-5789	7
Gotta Marry off Our Daughter	RCA Victor 20-5891	7
Papa Loves Mambo	RCA Victor 20-5891	7
Some Little Bug is Going to Find You	RCA Victor 20-5939	7
Keep on the Sunny Side of Life	RCA Victor 20-5939	6
Old Dan Tucker	RCA Victor 20-6006	7
Gooseberry Pie	RCA Victor 20-6006	7
In the Future	RCA Victor 20-6179	7

Source: Charles K. Wolfe, "Discography," Everybody's Grandpa: Fifty Years Behind the Mike, by Grandpa Jones (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 238-248.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-22: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Pee Wee King, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
That Cheap Look In Your Eye	Bullet 614	3
You Were the Cause of It All	Bullet 614	2
Out of My Mind	RCA Victor 20-0004	3
Arkansas Traveler	RCA Victor 20-0120	10
Tennessee Central Number Nine	RCA Victor 20-2111	6
Steel Guitar Rag	RCA Victor 20-2111	10
Texas Toni-Lee	RCA Victor 20-2212	1
Southland Polka	RCA Victor 20-2212	7
Keep Them Cold Icy Fingers Off Me	RCA Victor 20-2263	7
Kentucky Waltz	RCA Victor 20-2263	2
I Hear You Knockin'	RCA Victor 20-2366	3
Ten Gallon Boogie	RCA Victor 20-2366	10
Don't Feel Sorry For Me	RCA Victor 20-2520	3
Don't Forget	RCA Victor 20-2520	1
Tennessee Waltz	RCA Victor 20-2680	2
Rootie Tootie	RCA Victor 20-2680	7
Gotta Climb Those Golden Stairs	RCA Victor 20-2727	9
Gospel Boogie	RCA Victor 20-2727	9
Juke Box Blues	RCA Victor 20-2841	7
Oh Monah	RCA Victor 20-2841	7
Everytime I Feel the Spirit	RCA Victor 20-2986	9
Singin' As I Go	RCA Victor 20-2986	9
Forty Nine Women	RCA Victor 20-2995	7
Quit Honkin' that Horn	RCA Victor 20-2995	7
Say Good Mornin' Nellie	RCA Victor 20-3106	7
New York to New Orleans	RCA Victor 20-3106	6
Chattanooga Bess	RCA Victor 20-3232	7
Bull Fiddle Boogie	RCA Victor 20-3232	10
Ghost and Honest Joe, The	RCA Victor 21-0004	7
Waltz of the Alamo	RCA Victor 21-0015	2
I Lost My Love (The Color Song)	RCA Victor 21-0015	2
Alabama Moon	RCA Victor 21-0037	2
Tennessee Tears	RCA Victor 21-0037	2
Nashville Waltz, The	RCA Victor 21-0086	1
Tennessee Polka	RCA Victor 21-0086	7
Bonaparte's Retreat	RCA Victor 21-0111	1
Waltz of Regret, The	RCA Victor 21-0111	2
You Call Everybody Darlin'	RCA Victor 21-0115	10
Shocking Rye Straw	RCA Victor 21-0115	10

Table A-22: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Battle Hymn of the Republic	RCA Victor 21-0116	10
Black-Eyed Susie	RCA Victor 21-0116	10
Cornbread, 'Lasses, and Sassafras Tea	RCA Victor 21-0117	10
Fire on the Mountain	RCA Victor 21-0117	10
Devil's Dream	RCA Victor 21-0119	10
Fisher's Hornpipe	RCA Victor 21-0119	10
Sally Goodin'	RCA Victor 21-0120	10
Billy in the Low Ground	RCA Victor 21-0121	10
Whistling Rufus	RCA Victor 21-0121	10
Whisper Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0167	1
When They Played That Old Missouri Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0167	1
Rag Mop	RCA Victor 21-0167	7
Blame It All on Nashville	RCA Victor 21-0307	7
Kissing Dance, The	RCA Victor 21-0307	7
What, Where, and When	RCA Victor 21-0332	2
Birmingham Bounce	RCA Victor 21-0332	7
Blue Grass Waltz	RCA Victor 21-0354	2
Get Together Polka	RCA Victor 21-0354	7
We're Gonna Go Fishin' (Next Saturday Night)	RCA Victor 21-0379	1
Cincinnati Dancing Pig	RCA Victor 21-0379	7
River Road Two Step	RCA Victor 21-0393	7
Mop Rag Boogie	RCA Victor 21-0393	7
Heglegged Hilegged	RCA Victor 21-0407	7
No One But You	RCA Victor 21-0429	2
Within My Heart (La Golondrina)	RCA Victor 21-0429	2
Strange Little Girl, The	RCA Victor 21-0451	6
Chew Tobacco Rag	RCA Victor 21-0451	7
Slow Poke	RCA Victor 21-0489	7
Two Roads	RCA Victor 20-4238	2
Makin' Like a Train	RCA Victor 20-4238	7
Ragtime Annie Lee	RCA Victor 20-4458	1
Silver and Gold	RCA Victor 20-4458	6
Busybody	RCA Victor 20-4655	7
I Don't Mind	RCA Victor 20-4655	7
Two-Faced Clock	RCA Victor 20-4883	7
Mighty Pretty Waltz, A	RCA Victor 20-4883	2
My Adobe Hacienda	RCA Victor 20-4969	6
Spanish Two Step	RCA Victor 20-4969	10
Over the Waves	RCA Victor 20-4970	10

Table A-22: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Steel Guitar Rag	RCA Victor 20-4970	10
Varsoviana	RCA Victor 20-4971	10
San Antonio Rose	RCA Victor 20-4971	2
One Rose, The (That's Left In My Heart)	RCA Victor 20-4972	2
Under the Double Eagle	RCA Victor 20-4972	10
Tennessee Tango	RCA Victor 20-5009	7
Crazy Waltz, The	RCA Victor 20-5009	3
Railroad Boogie	RCA Victor 20-5144	7
Crying Steel Guitar Waltz, The	RCA Victor 20-5144	2
Screwball	RCA Victor 20-5260	7
Last Night on the Porch, The	RCA Victor 20-5260	7
Changing Partners	RCA Victor 20-5337	1
If and When	RCA Victor 20-5344	2
Your Kisses Aren't Kisses Anymore	RCA Victor 20-5344	3
Oh Mis' Rable Love	RCA Victor 20-5454	7
Ricochet	RCA Victor 20-5454	3
Bimbo	RCA Victor 20-5537	7
Deck of Cards	RCA Victor 20-5587	8
Red Deck of Cards, The	RCA Victor 20-5587	8
Huggin' My Pillow (and Dreaming of You)	RCA Victor 20-5632	2
Why Don't Y' All Go Home?	RCA Victor 20-5632	7
Backward, Turn Backward	RCA Victor 20-5694	2
Indian Giver	RCA Victor 20-5694	3
In a Garden of Roses	RCA Victor 20-5782	2
How Long	RCA Victor 20-5782	2
Here Lies My Heart	RCA Victor 20-5847	2
Keep Your Eye on My Darling	RCA Victor 20-5847	6
Peaches and Cream	RCA Victor 20-5889	7
I Can't Tell a Waltz From a Tango	RCA Victor 20-5889	7
You Won't Need My Love Anymore	RCA Victor 20-6302	3
Peek-A-Boo Waltz	RCA Victor 20-6302	2

Source: Otto Kitsinger and Richard Weize, "Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys: The 1946-1958 Discography," Pee Wee King and His Golden West Cowboys, by Otto Kitsinger (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 56-63.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-23: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Hank Locklin, 1948-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Rio Grande Waltz	Gold Star 1341	6
You've Been Talking In Your Sleep	Gold Star 1341	3
Please Come Back and Stay	Royalty 603	2
I've Got a Feeling Somebody's Falling	Royalty 603	6
I Worship You	Royalty 604	2
You've Been Talking in Your Sleep	Royalty 604	3
One More Mistake	DJ 501	3
Same Sweet Girl, The	Four Star 1313	1
Last Look at Mother, The	Four Star 1313	6
Knocking at the Door	Four Star 1337	3
Born to Ramble	Four Star 1337	5
I'm Lonely Darling	Four Star 1360	2
Send Me the Pillow You Dream On	Four Star 1360	1
Our Love Will Show the Way	Four Star 1397	1
You Burned a Hole in My Heart	Four Star 1397	2
Are You Treating Your Neighbor as Yourself	Four Star 1405	9
Fifty Miles of Elbow Room	Four Star 1405	9
Midnight Tears	Four Star 1444	2
It's So Hard to Say I Love You	Four Star 1444	2
Pinball Millionaire	Four Star 1466	7
Paper Face	Four Star 1466	2
Place and the Time, The	Four Star 1506	1
Come Share the Sunshine With Me	Four Star 1506	1
Holy Train, The	Four Star 1521	9
Is There Room For Me	Four Star 1521	9
Tho I've Lost	Four Star 1530	3
No One is Sweeter Than You	Four Star 1530	1
Year of Time, A	Four Star 1545	2
To Whom It May Concern	Four Star 1545	7
Song of the Whispering Leaves, The	Four Star 1556	2
I Could Love You Darling	Four Star 1556	1
Your House of Love Won't Stand	Four Star 1564	3
Who Do You Think You're Fooling	Four Star 1564	3
Send Me the Pillow You Dream On, Number Two	Four Star 1574	1
I Always Lose	Four Star 1574	4
Stumpy Joe	Four Star 1582	7
I'm Going to Copyright Your Kisses	Four Star 1582	7
Tomorrow's Just Another Day to Cry	Four Star 1594	2
Tell Me You Love Me	Four Star 1594	1

Table A-23: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Down Texas Way	Four Star 1605	6
Could You	Four Star 1605	1
Who is Knocking at My Heart	Four Star 1608	9
Harvest is Ripe, The (The Laborers are Few)	Four Star 1608	9
Golden Wristwatch	Four Star 1624	2
(Sittin') Alone at a Table For Two	Four Star 1624	2
Crazy Over You	Four Star 1632	1
Won't You Change Your Mind	Four Star 1632	2
Let Me Be the One	Four Star 1641	1
I'm Tired of Bummin' Around	Four Star 1641	6
Empty Bottles, Empty Heart	Four Star 1688	4
Who Will it Be	Four Star 1688	2
Picking Sweethearts	Decca 28526	2
I Like to Play With Your Kisses	Decca 28526	7
I Can't Run Away	Decca 28740	2
Red Rose, The	Decca 28740	2
Shadows	Decca 28826	2
Lessons in Love	Decca 28826	3
Mysteries of Life	Decca 29030	6
Queen of Hearts	Decca 29030	2
Whispering Scandal	Decca 29270	1
Baby You Can Count Me In	Decca 29270	1
Let Me Confess	Decca 29599	4
I'll Always Be Standing By	Decca 29599	1

Source: Kevin Coffey, et al., "Hank Locklin: Gold Star, Royalty, Four Star and Decca Discography," Hank Locklin: Send Me the Pillow You Dream On, by Kevin Coffey (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 28-31.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-24: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Louvin Brothers, 1947-1953

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Alabama	Apollo 202	6
Alabama	Decca 46187	6
Seven Year Blues	Decca 46187	2
Weapon of Prayer	MGM 10988	8
They've Got the Church Outnumbered	MGM 10988	8
You'll Be Rewarded Over There	MGM 11065	9
Robe Of White	MGM 11065	8
(I'm Changing the Words to) My Love Song to You	MGM 11221	2
Get Acquainted Waltz, The	MGM 11221	2
Great Atomic Power, The	MGM 11277	9
Insured Beyond the Grave	MGM 11277	9
Do You Live What You Preach	MGM 11392	9
I'll Live With God (To Die No More)	MGM 11392	9
Gospel Way, The	MGM 11652	9
Sons and Daughters of God, The	MGM 11652	9
Family Who Prays, The (Never Shall Part)	Capitol 2296	9
Let Travel, Travel On	Capitol 2296	9
Broad Minded	Capitol 2381	8
I Know What You're Talking About	Capitol 2381	9
Born Again	Capitol 2510	9
From Mother's Arms to Korea	Capitol 2510	8
I Love God's Way of Living	Capitol 2612	9
Preach the Gospel	Capitol 2612	9
God Bless Her ('Cause She's My Mother)	Capitol 2753	6
No One to Sing for Me	Capitol 2753	6
If We Forget God	Capitol 2852	8
Satan Lied to Me	Capitol 2852	9
Satan and the Saint	Capitol 2965	9
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Capitol 2965	9
Make Him a Soldier	Capitol 3083	9

Source: Eddie Stubbs, Richard Weize, and Charles Wolfe, "The Louvin Brothers,"
In Close Harmony: The Story of the Louvin Brothers, by Charles K. Wolfe,
 (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1992) 42.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-25: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Maddox Brothers and Rose,
1947-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Midnight Train	Four-Star 1184	2
Careless Driver	Four-Star 1184	8
I Couldn't Believe It Was True	Four-Star 1185	2
Milk Cow Blues	Four-Star 1185	7
Whoa, Sailor	Four-Star 1209	7
Navajo Maiden	Four-Star 1209	7
Move It On Over	Four-Star 1209	7
Mean and Wicked Boogie	Four-Star 1210	7
Sweet Little You	Four-Star 1210	1
Honky Tonkin'	Four-Star 1238	1
Brown Eyes	Four-Star 1238	2
Tramp on the Street	Four-Star 1239	9
Flowers for the Masters Bouquet	Four-Star 1239	9
Time Nor Tide	Four-Star 1271	1
Gosh, I Miss You all the Time	Four-Star 1271	2
New Muleskinner Blues	Four-Star 1288	5
Philadelphia Lawyer	Four-Star 1289	6
Sunset Trail Waltz	Four-Star 1289	1
Who at My Door is Standing	Four-Star 1301	9
When Gods Dips His Pen of Love in My Heart	Four-Star 1301	9
Last Night I Heard You Crying in Your Sleep	Four-Star 1322	3
Dear Lord Take My Hand	Four-Star 1326	9
Garden in the Sky	Four-Star 1326	8
On the Banks of the Old Ponchartrain	Four-Star 1328	5
At the First Fall of Snow	Four-Star 1328	8
Why Don't You Haul off and Love Me?	Four-Star 1369	7
George's Playhouse Boogie	Four-Star 1369	7
Sally Let Your Bangs Hang Down	Four-Star 1398	7
You're Been Talkin' in Your Sleep	Four-Star 1398	3
I'm Sending Daffydills	Four-Star 1399	1
Mule Train	Four-Star 1399	7
Jingle Bells	Four-Star 1400	7
Silent Night	Four-Star 1400	9
I Love the Women	Four-Star 1440	7
Just One Little Kiss	Four-Star 1440	3
Choc'late Ice Cream Cone	Four-Star 1458	7
He Will Set Your Fields on Fire	Four-Star 1473	9
We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder	Four-Star 1473	9

Table A-25: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Chill in My Heart	Four-Star 1507	2
Water Baby Blues (Boogie)	Four-Star 1507	10
Oklahoma Sweetheart Sally Ann	Four-Star 1527	1
It's Only Human Nature	Four-Star 1527	1
Dark as a Dungeon	Four-Star 1540	5
Faded Love	Four-Star 1540	3
(Pay Me) Alimony (Blues)	Four-Star 1549	7
(New) Step it Up and Go	Four-Star 1549	7
How Can You Refuse Him Now?	Four-Star 1553	9
If We Never Meet Again	Four-Star 1553	9
Shimmy Shakin' Daddy	Four-Star 1570	7
No One is Sweeter Than You	Four-Star 1570	1
South	Four-Star 1577	6
Rock All Our Babies to Sleep	Four-Star 1577	7
I Want to Live and Love	Four-Star 1586	1
I Wish I Was a Single Girl Again	Four-Star 1586	7
Eight Thirty Blues	Four-Star 1596	3
Your Love Light Never Shone	Four-Star 1596	3
Detour, # 2	Four-Star 1604	6
I Still Write Your Name in the Sand	Four-Star 1604	2
Cowboy Bugle Boy	Four-Star 1618	7
Texas Guitar Stomp	Four-Star 1618	10
I Just Steal Away and Pray	Four-Star 1626	9
I'd Rather Have Jesus	Four-Star 1626	9
Rosalie by the Rio	Four-Star 1633	1
Meanest Man in Town	Four-Star 1633	7
I'll Fly Away	Four-Star 1639	N/A
Land Where We'll Never Grow Old, The	Four-Star 1639	N/A
Mama Says its Naughty	Four-Star 1657	7
Old Pal of Yesterday	Four-Star 1657	2
I'll Never Do It Again	Four-Star 1664	2
I've Stopped My Dreamin' About You	Four-Star 1664	3
Baby You Should Live So Long	Four-Star 1671	3
I'll Make Sweet Love to You	Columbia 20955	7
Wedding Blues	Columbia 20955	2
Cocquita of Laredo	Columbia 21016	7
Take These Shackles from My Heart	Columbia 21016	3
Little Willie Waltz	Columbia 21062	7
Hiccough Song, The	Columbia 21062	7

Table A-25: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
No Help Wanted	Columbia 21065	7
Hearts and Flowers	Columbia 21065	3
Empty Mansions	Columbia 21099	3
Green Grow the Lilacs	Columbia 21099	2
On Mexico's Beautiful Shores	Columbia 21146	7
A Wootin' We Will Go	Columbia 21146	1
I Won't Stand in Your Way	Columbia 21181	3
Kiss Me Quick and Go	Columbia 21181	7
Beautiful Bouquet	Columbia 21217	6
Time is Spring, The	Columbia 21217	7
Kiss From Your Lips, A	Columbia 21270	1
My Child Has a Billy Goat	Columbia 21270	7
Forever Yours	Columbia 21306	1
You Won't Believe This	Columbia 21306	7
I Could Never Stop Lovin' You	Columbia 21345	1
Fountain of Youth	Columbia 21345	9
Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?	Columbia 21426	9
Just Over the Stars	Columbia 21426	9

Source: Jonny Whiteside, Ramblin' Rose: The Life and Career of Rose Maddox
(Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1997) 270-273.

*Lyrical Categories defined by Figure 4

Table A-26: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Wade Mainer, 1939-1945

Song	Release Number	Category*
Sparkling Blue Eyes	Bluebird 8042	1
We Will Miss Him	Bluebird 8042	8
I Left My Home in the Mountains	Bluebird 8091	N/A
I Met Her at a Ball One Night	Bluebird 8091	N/A
You May Forsake Me	Bluebird 8120	N/A
Look On and Cry	Bluebird 8120	N/A
One Little Kiss	Bluebird 8145	2
Mama, Don't Make Me Go to Bed	Bluebird 8145	6
Crying Holy	Bluebird 8203	N/A
Heaven Bells are Ringing	Bluebird 8203	N/A
Sparkling Blue Eyes #2	Bluebird 8249	2
Gospel Cannon Ball	Bluebird 8249	9
Poor Drunkard's Dream, The	Bluebird 8273	9
Were You There?	Bluebird 8273	9
Great and Final Judgement, The	Bluebird 8288	9
What a Wonderful Savior is He	Bluebird 8288	9
Why Not Make Heaven Your Home	Bluebird 8340	9
Mansions in the Sky	Bluebird 8340	9
Not a Word of That Be Said	Bluebird 8359	9
Drifting Thru an Unfriendly World	Bluebird 8359	9
Shake My Mother's Hand for Me	Bluebird 8848	9
Precious Memories	Bluebird 8848	6
He Gave His Life	Bluebird 8887	9
Precious Jewel, The	Bluebird 8887	8
Anywhere is Home	Bluebird 8965	9
I Can Tell You the Time	Bluebird 8965	9
Ramblin' Boy	Bluebird 8990	5
Old Ruben	Bluebird 8990	5
Dust on the Bible	King 574	9
There'll Come a Time	King 574	6
Soldier's Grave	King 585	8
He's Coming to Us Dead	King 585	8
Little Pal	King 603	2
Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me	King 603	9

Sources: Brad McCuen, "Mainer's Discography," Country Directory No. 4 (1962): 24; Thurston Moore and Ed Kahn, "King 500 Series Numerical," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 4, No. 10-Vol. 6, No. 17 (Summer 1968-Spring 1970).

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-27: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Leon McAuliffe, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Down at the Roadside Inn	Majestic 11014	7
Steel Guitar Rag	Majestic 11014	10
Covered Wagon Rolled Right Along, The	Majestic 11015	7
Santa Fe is a Long, Long Way From Broadway	Majestic 11015	6
Twin Guitar Boogie	Majestic 11016	10
In Her Own Peculiar Way	Majestic 11016	7
Search My Heart	Majestic 11027	2
Plain Talking Man From the West, A	Majestic 11027	7
T-u-l-s-a Straight Ahead	Majestic 11032	6
Cowboy's Christmas Song, A	Majestic 11032	5
Careless Hands	Columbia 20546	2
Panhandle Rag	Columbia 20546	10
Somebody Else is Beatin' My Time	Columbia 20565	7
No One For Me	Columbia 20565	3
Sugar and Salt	Columbia 20622	2
Panhandle Waltz	Columbia 20622	10
Three Bears	Columbia 20646	7
Twin Fiddle Rag	Columbia 20646	10
Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy	Columbia 20669	7
Rag Mop	Columbia 20669	7
Birmingham Bounce	Columbia 20688	1
Cimarron Rag	Columbia 20688	10
Bonaparte's Retreat	Columbia 20706	1
What, Where and When	Columbia 20706	2
Jelly Beany Rag	Columbia 20755	7
What've Yo Got	Columbia 20755	1
I've Never Lived in Tennessee	Columbia 20807	5
There's A Right Way, A Wrong Way	Columbia 20807	7
Blue Guitar Stomp	Columbia 20845	10
I Didn't Know How Much I Loved You	Columbia 20845	2
Makin' Believe You're There	Columbia 20872	2
Search My Heart	Columbia 20872	2
Blacksmith Blues	Columbia 20907	5
I'm Going Back to Birmingham	Columbia 20907	6
Who Took My Ring From Your Finger	Columbia 20952	2
This Side of Town	Columbia 20952	3
Stolen Love	Columbia 21020	3
Hear Me Now	Columbia 21020	3
Bitter Tears	Columbia 21072	4

Table A-27: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Redskin Rag	Columbia 21072	10
Eating Right Out of Your Hand	Columbia 21115	2
Heart Attacks	Columbia 21115	3
Blue Man's Blues	Columbia 21174	10
Run 'em Off	Columbia 21174	7
Tie Your Apron Strings Around My Heart	Columbia 21227	1
Wished You Would	Columbia 21227	1
Sh-Boom	Columbia 21283	1
Smooth Sailing	Columbia 21283	10
Mr. Steel Guitar	Columbia 21319	10
One Little Dream Of You	Columbia 21319	2

Source: The Billboard, various issues, 1946-1955.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-28: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Bill Monroe, 1940-1945

Song	Release Number	Category*
Six White Horses	Bluebird 8568	5
Mule Skinner Blues	Bluebird 8568	5
Cryin' Holy Unto My Lord	Bluebird 8611	9
No Letter in the Mail	Bluebird 8611	2
Dog House Blues	Bluebird 8692	7
Katy Hill	Bluebird 8692	10
I Wonder if You Feel the Way I Do	Bluebird 8813	2
Tennessee Blues	Bluebird 8813	10
Blue Yodel No. 7	Bluebird 8861	3
In the Pines	Bluebird 8861	5
Coupon Song	Bluebird 8893	7
Orange Blossom Special	Bluebird 8893	6
Shake My Mother's Hand for Me	Bluebird 8893	6
Were You There?	Bluebird 8953	9
Honky Tonk Swing	Bluebird 8988	10
Back Up and Push	Bluebird 8988	10
Rocky Road Blues	Columbia 20013	3
Kentucky Waltz	Columbia 20013	2
Footprints in the Snow	Columbia 20080	8
True Life Blues	Columbia 20080	2
Goodbye Old Pal	Columbia 20370	8
Blue Grass Special	Columbia 20384	10

Sources: "Bill Monroe," Disc Collector No. 15 (n.d): 31; Mark Humphrey, The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1945-1949 (New York: Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., 1992) 34.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-29: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Bill Monroe, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Mansions for Me	Columbia 20107	9
Mother's Only Sleeping	Columbia 20107	6
Will You Be Loving Another Man	Columbia 20198	3
Blue Yodel No. 4	Columbia 20198	7
Blue Moon of Kentucky	Columbia 20370	2
How Will I Explain About You	Columbia 20384	2
Shine Hallelujah Shine	Columbia 20402	9
I'm Traveling On and On	Columbia 20402	9
My Rose of Old Kentucky	Columbia 20423	1
Sweetheart You Done Me Wrong	Columbia 20423	2
I Hear a Sweet Voice Calling	Columbia 20459	8
Little Cabin Home on the Hill	Columbia 20459	2
Little Community Church	Columbia 20488	9
That Home Above	Columbia 20488	9
Wicked Path of Sin	Columbia 20503	9
Summertime is Past and Gone	Columbia 20503	1
When You are Lonely	Columbia 20526	3
It's Might Dark to Travel	Columbia 20526	2
Blue Grass Breakdown	Columbia 20552	10
Toy Heart	Columbia 20552	3
Remember the Cross	Columbia 20576	9
Old Crossroad, The	Columbia 20576	9
Heavy Traffic Ahead	Columbia 20595	10
Along About Daybreak	Columbia 20595	2
I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky	Columbia 20612	1
Molly and Tenbrooks	Columbia 20612	7
Girl in the Blue Velvet Band, The	Columbia 20648	5
Blue Grass Stomp	Columbia 20648	10
Travellin' this Lonesome Road	Columbia 20676	2
Can't You Hear Me Callin'	Columbia 20676	2
New Muleskinner Blues	Decca 46222	5
My Little Georgia Rose	Decca 46222	1
Alabama Waltz	Decca 46236	1
Old Fiddler, The	Decca 46236	6
I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome	Decca 46254	2
Boat of Love	Decca 46254	9
Blue Grass Ramble	Decca 46266	10
Memories of You	Decca 46266	2
Uncle Pen	Decca 46283	6

Table A-29: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
When the Golden Leaves Begin to Fall	Decca 46283	8
On the Old Kentucky Shore	Decca 46298	8
Poison Love	Decca 46298	3
Lord Protect My Soul	Decca 46305	9
River of Death	Decca 46305	9
Kentucky Waltz	Decca 46314	2
Prisoner's Song	Decca 46314	5
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Decca 46325	9
Angels Rock Me to Sleep	Decca 46325	9
Rotation Blues	Decca 46344	8
Lonesome Truck Driver's blues	Decca 46344	5
I'll Meet You in Church Sunday Morning	Decca 46351	9
Get Down on Your Knees and Pray	Decca 46351	9
Highway of Sorrow	Decca 46369	2
Sugar Coated Love	Decca 46369	3
Brakeman's Blues	Decca 46380	5
Travelin' Blues	Decca 46380	3
Christmas Times's A-Coming	Decca 46386	6
First Whippoorwill, The	Decca 46386	2
Letter From My Darling	Decca 46392	2
Raw Hide	Decca 46392	10
I Believed in You Little Darling	Decca 29886	2
Sitting Alone in the Moonlight	Decca 30178	2
You'll Find Her Name Written There	Decca 30178	8
New John Henry Blues	Decca 31540	5

Sources: "Bill Monroe," Disc Collector, No. 15 (n.d.): 31; Mark Humphrey, The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1945-1949 (New York: Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., 1992): 34-35; Neil V. Rosenberg, Bluegrass: 1950-1958 (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1990) 57-62.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-30: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by George Morgan, 1949-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Candy Kisses	Columbia 20547	2
Please Don't Let Me Love You	Columbia 20547	2
All I Need is Some More Lovin'	Columbia 20563	2
Rainbow in My Heart	Columbia 20563	2
Put All Your Love in a Cookie Jar	Columbia 20594	1
Room Full Of Roses	Columbia 20594	2
I Love Everything About You	Columbia 20627	1
Cry-Baby Heart	Columbia 20627	2
Ring On Your Finger	Columbia 20655	2
Why in Heaven's Name	Columbia 20655	3
Angel Mother	Columbia 20678	6
Lucky Seven	Columbia 20678	6
Greedy Fingers	Columbia 20702	3
Warm Hands, Cold Heart	Columbia 20702	3
You Win the Bride	Columbia 20730	2
So Far	Columbia 20730	1
Somebody Robbed My Beehive	Columbia 20744	7
I Love No One But You	Columbia 20744	2
Don't Be Afraid to Love Me	Columbia 20747	2
I Know You'll Never Change	Columbia 20747	2
Broken Candy Heart	Columbia 20800	2
I Wish I May, I Might	Columbia 20800	2
Tennessee Hillbilly Ghost	Columbia 20822	7
My Heart Keeps Telling Me	Columbia 20822	2
Waltzing By the Ohio	Columbia 20850	2
My Baby Lied to Me	Columbia 20850	7
Mansion Over the Hilltop	Columbia 20884	9
Cry of the Lamb	Columbia 20884	9
You're a Little Doll	Columbia 20906	1
Almost	Columbia 20906	2
Be Sure You Know	Columbia 20945	3
Whistle My Love	Columbia 20945	1
Every Little Thing Rolled Into One	Columbia 21006	1
One-Woman Man	Columbia 21006	1
Stranger in the Night	Columbia 21052	2
Please Believe	Columbia 21052	2
Lover's Quarrel	Columbia 21070	2
Most of All	Columbia 21070	1
Withered Roses	Columbia 21071	2

Table A-30: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
You Love Me Just Enough to Hurt Me	Columbia 21071	3
I Passed By Your Window	Columbia 21108	2
Half-Hearted	Columbia 21108	3
Lonesome Waltz, The	Columbia 21151	2
I'll Furnish the Shoulder You Cry On	Columbia 21151	2
Every Prayer is a Flower (In the Garden of the Lord)	Columbia 21170	9
How Many Times	Columbia 21170	9
Look What Followed Me Home Tonight	Columbia 21178	7
No One Knows it Better Than Me	Columbia 21178	4
Love, Love, Love	Columbia 21204	1
First Time I Told You a Lie, The	Columbia 21204	2
It's Been Nice	Columbia 21237	5
I Think I'm Going to Cry	Columbia 21237	2
Walking Shoes	Columbia 21276	3
Sweetheart	Columbia 21276	1
Whither Thou Goest	Columbia 21318	9
Oh, Gentle Shepherd	Columbia 21318	9
Shot in the Dark, A	Columbia 21321	7
Oceans of Tears (I've Shed for You)	Columbia 21321	2
Cheap Affair, A	Columbia 21344	1
So Lonesome	Columbia 21344	4
I'd Like to Know	Columbia 21390	1
Best Mistake, The	Columbia 21390	4
Ain't Love Grand	Columbia 21430	1
You Don't Have to Walk Alone	Columbia 21438	N/A
Shoe is On the Other Foot Now, The	Columbia 38663	3
Wedding Dolls (From Your Wedding Cake)	Columbia 38663	2

Source: Otto Kitsinger, Richard Weize and Larry Zwisohn, "George Morgan: The Columbia Discography," George Morgan: Candy Kisses, by Colin Escott (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1993) 30, 35.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-31: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Morris Brothers, 1939-1945

Song	Release Number	Category*
Just How Pretty You Smile	Bluebird 8043	N/A
Married Woman Blues	Bluebird 8043	N/A
One Little Word	Bluebird 8252	2
Wabash Cannonball, No. 2	Bluebird 8252	6
My Lord Will Come For Me	Bluebird 8269	9
He'll Set Your Fields on Fire	Bluebird 8269	9
It's Blues	Bluebird 8314	2
Gabriel's Trumpet	Bluebird 8314	9
Blessed Jesus Hold My Hand	Bluebird 8567	9
Telephone to Glory	Bluebird 8567	9
Farewell Kentucky	Bluebird 8653	6
Old Covered Bridge	Bluebird 8653	6
I Will Meet My Precious Mother	Bluebird 8677	6
If You Love Your Mother	Bluebird 8677	6
Dream of the Miner's Child	Bluebird 8841	8
Little Nellie	Bluebird 8841	8
Now She's Gone	Montgomery Ward 8470	N/A
Last Letter	Montgomery Ward 8470	N/A
Salty Dog Blues	Victor 20-1783	7
Somebody Loves You Darling	Victor 20-1783	2
Grave Upon the Green Hillside	Victor 20-1905	6
Tragic Romance	Victor 20-1905	8

Source: Rodney McElrea, "The Morris Brothers," Country News and Views Vol. 3 No. 4 (April 1965): 10.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-32: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Moon Mullican, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
The Lonesome Hearted Blues	King 565	2
It's a Sin to Love You Like I Do	King 565	2
New Pretty Blonde (New Jole Blon)	King 578	7
When a Soldier Knocks and Finds Nobody Home	King 578	8
New Milk Cow Blues	King 607	N/A
Moonshine Polka	King 607	N/A
Foggy River	King 613	2
Worries On My Mind	King 613	2
Jole Blon's Sister	King 632	7
Showboy Special	King 632	10
I Left My Heart In Texas	King 673	6
Sweeter Than the Flowers	King 673	6
Columbus Stockade Blues	King 684	5
Over the Waves	King 684	10
What My Eyes See My Heart Believes	King 722	3
Wait a Minute	King 722	7
A Maiden's Prayer	King 734	2
I'm Gonna Move Home Bye and Bye	King 734	9
The Tie That Binds	King 745	8
Why Don't You Love Me	King 745	2
Jole Blon is Gone, Amen	King 761	7
Oh! She's Gone But Not Forgotten	King 761	2
Sweeter Than the Flowers, No. 2	King 783	8
There's A Chill on the Hill Tonight	King 783	2
What Have I Done That Made You Go Away	King 796	2
You Had Your Way	King 796	3
I'll Sail My Ship Alone	King 796	2
Moon's Tune	King 796	7
Broken Dreams	King 839	2
Don't Ever Take My Picture Down	King 839	3
You Don't Have to Be a Baby to Cry	King 868	2
Southern Hospitality	King 868	6
Goodnight Irene	King 886	1
Mona Lisa	King 886	7
Nine-Tenths of the Tennessee River	King 894	2
Well Oh Well	King 894	7
I Was Sorta Wonderin'	King 917	2
The Leaves Mustn't Fall	King 917	8
Too Many Irons in the Fire	King 931	3

Table A-32: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Short But Sweet	King 931	1
Without a Port of Love	King 947	2
The Lamp of Life (Is Burning Low)	King 947	6
Cherokee Boogie (Eh-Oh-Aleena)	King 965	7
Love is the Light that Leads Me Home	King 965	1
Heartless Lover	King 984	3
Another Night is Coming	King 984	2
Piano Breakdown	King 1006	10
Memphis Blues	King 1006	10
Country Boogie	King 1007	10
Moonshine Blues	King 1007	10
Million Regrets, A	King 1043	3
Shoot the Moon	King 1043	10
My Tears Will Pour Just Like the Rain	King 1060	2
Triflin' Woman Blues	King 1060	3
Save a Little Dream for Me	King 1078	N/A
Trouble, Trouble	King 1078	N/A
Jambalaya	King 1106	7
Mighty Pretty Waltz, A	King 1106	2
Pipeliners Blues	King 1137	7
Sugar Beet	King 1137	1
Crushed Red Rose, A	King 1152	8
1000 and 1 Sleepless Nights	King 1152	2
So Long	King 1164	3
Oggie, Oggie, Oggie	King 1164	7
Rheumatism Boogie	King 1198	7
Rocket to the Moon	King 1198	7
Hey Mr. Cotton Picker	King 1221	7
Leaving You With a Worried Mind	King 1221	3
Grandpa Stole My Baby	King 1244	7
I Done It	King 1244	7
Good Deal Lucille	King 1337	7
Wanted	King 1337	7
(Don't Let Temptation) Turn You 'Round	King 1343	7
All I Need is You	King 1343	1
End of the Rainbow, The	King 1355	2
Where Beautiful Flowers Grow	King 1355	6
No Stranger	King 1366	N/A
I'm Hanging Up All My Work Clothes	King 1366	N/A

Table A-32: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Down Stream	King 1408	4
You Got the Best of Me	King 1408	3
Put Your Arms Around Me Honey	King 1421	10
Yearning (Just for You)	King 1421	10
Crippled for Life	King 1427	N/A
There Goes the Bride	King 1427	N/A
The Honey Song	King 1441	N/A
When Love Dies Where Does it Go	King 1447	2
What's the Matter With the Mill	King 1447	7
San Antonio Rose	King 1462	10
Moon's Blues	King 1462	10
Someone More Lonesome Than You	King 1467	N/A
Jose, the Mexican Boy	King 1467	N/A
Mexicali Rose	King 1481	10
Pan Handle Rag	King 1481	10

Source: Thurston Moore and Ed Kahn, "King 500 Series Numerical," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 4, No. 10-Vol. 6, No. 17 (Summer 1968-Spring 1970).

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-33: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Molly O'Day, 1946-1951

Song	Release Number	Category*
Tramp on the Street, The	Columbia 37559	9
Put My Rubber Dolly Away	Columbia 37559	8
Drunken Driver, The	Columbia 37938	9
Six More Miles	Columbia 37938	8
When God Comes and Gathers His Jewels	Columbia 37981	9
Tear Stained Letter, The	Columbia 37981	2
I Don't Care if Tomorrow Never Comes	Columbia 38138	2
I'll Never See Sunshine Again	Columbia 38138	2
Hero's Death, A	Columbia 20441	8
At the First Fall of Snow	Columbia 20494	8
Lonely Mound of Clay	Columbia 20514	8
Singing Waterfall	Columbia 20514	8
Black Sheep Returned to the Fold, The	Columbia 20534	9
Matthew Twenty-Four	Columbia 20534	9
Coming Down From God	Columbia 20584	9
Teardrops Falling in the Snow	Columbia 20584	8
Fifteen Years Ago	Columbia 20601	6
This is the End	Columbia 20629	4
Poor Ellen Smith	Columbia 20629	8
With You On My Mind	Columbia 20657	4
Heaven's Radio	Columbia 20732	9
Don't Sell Daddy Any More Whiskey	Columbia 20732	6
If You See My Savior	Columbia 20745	9
When My Time Comes to Go	Columbia 20745	9
Higher in My Prayers	Columbia 20864	9
It's Different Now	Columbia 20864	9
Travelling the Highway Home	Columbia 20890	9
When We See Our Redeemer's Face	Columbia 20890	9
When the Angels Rolled the Stone Away	Columbia 20937	9
It's All Coming True	Columbia 20937	9

Source: Ivan Tribe and Richard Weize, "Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks," Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks, Bear Family CD BCD 15565, 1992.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-34: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Hank Penny, 1939-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Sweet Talkin' Mama	Vocalion 04543	3
Flamin' Mamie	Vocalion 04543	7
Back Up a Little Bit	Vocalion 04640	3
I've Got the Right Key	Vocalion 04640	2
Cheatin' on Your Baby	Vocalion 04741	6
She's Just That Kind	Vocalion 04741	7
Blue Melody	Vocalion 04826	2
Mama's Getting Young	Vocalion 04826	7
Hesitation Blues	Vocalion 04922	2
They're All Just the Same to Me	Vocalion 04922	3
I Want My Rib	Vocalion 05026	7
Mississippi Muddle	Vocalion 05026	10
It Ain't Gonna Rain No More	Vocalion 05067	2
Yankee Doodle	Vocalion 05067	7
Last Goodbye, The	Vocalion 05148	2
Tonight You Belong to Me	Vocalion 05148	1
All Night and All Day Long	Vocalion 05215	7
You're So Different	Vocalion 05215	2
Black Eyed Susie	Vocalion 05270	7
Take It Slow and Easy	Vocalion 05270	1
I Told Them All About You	Vocalion 05321	1
Red Hot Papa	Vocalion 05321	7
Hot Time Mama	Vocalion 05380	7
I Like Molasses	Vocalion 05380	7
Cowboy's Swing	Vocalion 05438	10
Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	Vocalion 05438	7
Just a Message	Vocalion 05654	2
Oh Yes? Take Another Guess	Vocalion 05654	3
Peach Tree Shuffle	Vocalion 05724	10
Steel Guitar Hula	Vocalion 05724	10
Hawaiian Honeymoon	Vocalion 05797	10
Tobacco State Swing	Vocalion 05797	10
Just Forget	Vocalion 05844	2
Say Mister! Have You Met Rosie's Sister?	Vocalion 05844	7
I Don't Love Anybody But You	Vocalion 05957	2
Looking for Somebody to Love	Vocalion 05957	2
Just for Old Time's Sake	Vocalion 06004	N/A
One of Us Was Wrong	Vocalion 06004	N/A
Blue Ridge Blues	Conqueror 9846	10

Table A-34: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Standin' Neath the Old Pine Tree	Conqueror 9846	N/A
Midnight Blues	Conqueror 9847	N/A
Off to Honolulu	Conqueror 9847	N/A
Army Blues	Okeh 06426	7
Somebody	Okeh 06426	1
Why Did I Cry	Okeh 06522	3
Lonesome Train Blues	Okeh 06522	2
Tearstains on Your Letter	King 507	2
Last Night	King 507	3
Hope You're Satisfied	King 512	3
Talkin' 'Bout You	King 512	7
I'm Singing the Blues	King 519	3
When You Cry, You Cry Alone	King 519	6
Bless Your Heart, Little Girl	King 521	1
If Only You'd Be True	King 521	2
I'm Counting the Days	King 528	2
Steel Guitar Stomp	King 528	10
I Just Can't Understand	King 534	2
Get Yourself a Redhead	King 540	7
Missouri	King 540	6
These Wild, Wild Women	King 551	7
Time Will Tell	King 551	2
Merle's Buck Dance	King 581	10
Texas in My Soul	King 581	6
Here Today, Gone Tomorrow	King 597	2
Wildcat Mama	King 597	7
Open the Door, Richard	King 606	7
Freckle Song, The	King 606	7
Let Me Play With Your Poodle	King 614	7
Locked Out	King 621	7
Penny Blows His Top	King 621	10
Steel Guitar Polka	King 639	10
Won't You Ride In My Little Red Wagon	King 639	7
I'm gonna Change Things	King 672	3
I'm Not Surprised	King 672	3
Hillbilly Jump	King 698	10
Kentucky	King 698	6
Politics	King 711	7
Why Didn't I Think of That	King 711	3

Table A-34: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Big Fat Papa	King 727	7
Wouldn't It Be "Pun"	King 727	7
I'm Wasting My Time	King 748	2
Someone Moved the Ladder	King 748	7
One Heart, One Love, One Life	King 770	2
Red Hot Mama and Ice Cold Papa	King 770	7
Hillbilly Bebop	King 795	10
Sweet Talkin' Mama	King 795	3
My Inlaws Made an Outlaw Out of Me	King 813	7
We Met Too Late	King 813	2
Bloodshot Eyes	King 828	3
I Was Satisfied	King 828	2
Got the Louisiana Blues	King 842	7
Now Ain't You Glad Dear	King 842	1
Jersey Bounce	King 869	10
Wham! Bam! Thank You Ma'am	King 869	3
Tin Pan Polka	King 891	10
What've You Got	King 891	1
I'm Gonna Have My Picture Took	King 902	7
Remington Ride	King 902	10
Tell Me All About Georgia	King 924	6
Solitary Blues	King 924	4
Guess Who Took Your Place	King 941	3
Riding on the Old Ferris Wheel	King 941	1
You Better Save it For a Rainy Day	King 957	3
You're So Different	King 957	1
Alabama Jubilee	King 1020	7
Back Up a Little Bit	King 1020	3
Don't You Know it's Wrong	King 1090	3
Back Up a Little Bit	King 1090	3
Low Down Woman Blues	King 1122	3
Two Timin' Mama	King 1122	3
Just For Old Time's Sake	RCA Victor 21-0406	2
'Tater Pie	RCA Victor 21-0406	7
Bad Penny Always Returns, A	RCA Victor 21-0436	3
No Muss-No Fuss-No Bother	RCA Victor 21-0436	7
What She's Got is Mine	RCA Victor 21-0466	N/A
Hold the Phone	RCA Victor 21-0466	N/A
Catch 'em Young, Treat 'Em Rough, Tell 'em Nothin'	RCA Victor 21-0501	7

Table A-34: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
I Like Molasses	RCA Victor 21-0501	7
Taxes, Taxes	RCA Victor 21-4633	N/A
White Shotguns	RCA Victor 20-4363	7
I Want My Rib	RCA Victor 20-4363	7
(Won't You Ride In) My Little Red Wagon	RCA Victor 20-4414	7
You're Bound to Look Like a Monkey	RCA Victor 20-4633	7
If I Can't Wear the Pants	RCA Victor 20-4862	N/A
Makin' Love Tennessee Style	RCA Victor 20-5023	7
Sweet Mama Put Him in Low	RCA Victor 20-5023	7
I Want to Live a Little	RCA Victor 20-5150	7
That's My Weakness Now	RCA Victor 20-5150	7
You Can't Pull the Wool Over My Eyes	RCA Victor 20-5283	3
Fan It	RCA Victor 20-5283	7
Walkin' in the Snow	Decca 29314	N/A
Bloodshot Eyes	Decca 29597	3

Source: Rich Kienzle, "Hank Penny," Old Time Music No. 28 (Spring 1978): 11-15.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-35: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Webb Pierce, 1949-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Heebie Jeebie Blues	Four-Star 1357	7
Sweetheart, You Know I Love You So	Four-Star 1357	N/A
High-Geared Daddy	Four-Star 1413	7
English Sweetheart	Four-Star 1413	8
New Panhandle Rag	Four-Star 1447	1
Groovie Boogie Woogie Boy	Four-Star 1447	7
I Saw Your Face in the Moon	Four-Star 1479	3
Georgia Rag	Four-Star 1479	6
Hawaiian Echoes	Four-Star 1517	2
I've Loved You Forever It Seems	Four-Star 1517	2
Darkest Hour	Four-Star 1600	2
It's All Between the Lines	Four-Star 1600	2
Lucy Lee	Four-Star 1616	5
I'm Happy You Hurt Me	Four-Star 1629	3
Jilted Love	Four-Star 1629	2
Have You Ever Had the Feeling	Pacemaker 1012	7
I Got Religion Saturday Night	Pacemaker 1012	7
Last Waltz, The	Pacemaker 1015	2
In the Jailhouse Now	Pacemaker 1015	5
Drifting Texas Sand	Decca 46322	7
If Crying Would Make You Care	Decca 46322	2
California Blues (Blue Yodel #4)	Decca 46332	5
You Scared the Love Right Out of Me	Decca 46332	3
New Silver Bells	Decca 46364	2
Wondering	Decca 46364	2
You Know I'm Still in Love With You	Decca 46385	2
I'm Gonna See My Baby	Decca 46385	1
That Heart Belongs to Me	Decca 28091	1
So Used to Loving You	Decca 28091	2
I'll Always Take Care of You	Decca 28369	1
Back Street Affair	Decca 28369	1
Bow Thy Head	Decca 28431	9
Country Church	Decca 28431	6
I'll Go On Alone	Decca 28534	3
That's Me Without You	Decca 28534	2
The Last Waltz	Decca 28594	2
I Haven't Got the Heart	Decca 28594	3
Don't Throw Your Life Away	Decca 28725	1
It's Been So Long	Decca 28725	2

Table A-35: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
There Stands the Glass	Decca 28834	4
I'm Walking the Dog	Decca 28834	3
You Just Can't Be True	Decca 28991	3
Slowly	Decca 28991	1
Even Tho'	Decca 29107	2
Sparkling Brown Eyes	Decca 29107	1
Mother Call My Name in Prayer	Decca 29155	6
Bugle Call From Heaven	Decca 29155	9
You're Not Mine Anymore	Decca 29252	2
More and More	Decca 29252	3
The Waltz You Saved for Me	Decca 29336	N/A
One Day Later	Decca 29336	N/A
I'm Gonna Fall Out of Love With You	Decca 29391	3
In the Jailhouse Now	Decca 29391	7
Your Good for Nothing Heart	Decca 29480	3

Sources: The Billboard, various issues, 1949-1951; Don Roy, Otto Kitsinger, and Richard Weize, "Webb Pierce—The Decca Discography: 1951-December 15, 1958," Webb Pierce: The Wondering Boy (1951-1958), by Otto Kitsinger (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1990) n.p.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-36: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Elvis Presley, 1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
That's All Right	Sun 209	3
Blue Moon of Kentucky	Sun 209	2
I Don't Care if the Sun Don't Shine	Sun 210	1
Good Rockin' Tonight	Sun 210	7
Milkcow Blues Boogie	Sun 215	7
You're a Heartbreaker	Sun 215	3

Source: Peter Guralnick, Elvis: The King of Rock 'n' Roll: The Complete 50's Masters (New York: BMG Music, 1992) n.p.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4.

Table A-37: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Ray Price, 1950-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Jealous Lies	Bullet 701	3
Your Wedding Corsage	Bullet 701	2
If You're Ever Lonely Darling	Columbia 20810	3
You've Got My Troubles Now	Columbia 20810	3
I Saw My Castles Fall Today	Columbia 20833	2
Hey La La	Columbia 20833	8
Until Death Do Us Part	Columbia 20863	2
Heart Aching Blues	Columbia 20863	2
Weary Blues (From Waiting)	Columbia 20883	2
I Made a Mistake and I'm Sorry	Columbia 20883	3
I've Got to Hurry, Hurry, Hurry	Columbia 20913	1
Talk to Your Heart	Columbia 20913	2
I Know I'll Never Win Your Love Again	Columbia 20963	2
The Road of No Return	Columbia 20963	3
I Can't Escape From You	Columbia 21015	4
Won't You Please Be Mine (Just for Today)	Columbia 21015	2
I Lost the Only Love I Knew	Columbia 21025	4
Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes	Columbia 21025	1
You're Under Arrest (For Stealing My Heart)	Columbia 21053	1
My Old Scrapbook	Columbia 21053	2
The Price for Loving You	Columbia 21089	2
That's What I'll Get for Loving You	Columbia 21089	2
Cold Shoulder	Columbia 21117	3
You Weren't Ashamed to Kiss Me Last Night	Columbia 21117	3
The Wrong Side of Town	Columbia 21149	8
Who Stole That Train	Columbia 21149	7
You Always Get By	Columbia 21173	3
Leave Her Alone	Columbia 21173	2
Release Me	Columbia 21214	3
I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me)	Columbia 21214	1
Much Too Young to Die	Columbia 21249	2
I Love You So Much I Let You Go	Columbia 21249	2
I Could Love You More	Columbia 21299	2
What If He Don't Love You (Like I Do)	Columbia 21299	2
If You Don't, Somebody Else Will	Columbia 21315	3
Oh Yes Darling	Columbia 21315	1
I'm Alone Because I Love You	Columbia 21354	2
One Broken Heart (Don't Mean a Thing)	Columbia 21354	3

Source: Richard Weize and Rich Kienzle, "Ray Price: The Bullet and Columbia Discography (1950-1966)," Ray Price and His Cherokee Cowboys The Honky Tonk Years, 1950-1966, by Rich Kienzle (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1995) 64.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-38: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Reno and Smiley, 1951-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
When I Safely Reach That Other Shore	Federal 10015	9
Little Country Preacher	Federal 10015	9
Wings of Faith	Federal 10021	9
Jesus Will Save Your Soul	Federal 10021	9
I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap	King 1045	9
Hear Jerusalem Mourn	King 1045	9
There's Another Baby Waiting for Me Down the Line	King 1063	3
Drifting With the Tide	King 1063	2
I Want to Live Like Christ, My Savior	King 1079	9
Let in the Guiding Light	King 1079	9
Maybe You Will Change Your Mind	King 1104	3
Crazy Finger Blues	King 1104	10
Lord's Last Supper, The	King 1128	9
There's a Highway to Heaven	King 1128	9
I'm Gone, Long Gone	King 1150	3
Tennessee Cut-Up Breakdown	King 1150	10
Some Beautiful Day	King 1162	9
Jesus is Standing at My Right Hand	King 1162	9
Pretty Wreath for Mother's Grave, A	King 1199	6
Rose on God's Shore, A	King 1199	8
Choking the Strings	King 1235	10
I'm the Talk of the Town	King 1235	2
He's Coming Back to Earth Again	King 1263	9
My Mother's Bible	King 1263	6
Tennessee Breakdown	King 1283	10
I Could Cry	King 1283	2
I Can Hear the Angels Singing	King 1303	9
Mountain Church	King 1303	6
Please Don't Feel Sorry For Me	King 1332	3
Love Call Waltz	King 1332	1
Tree of Life	King 1352	9
Someone Will Love Me in Heaven	King 1352	9
Tally Ho	King 1360	1
Emotions	King 1360	2
Since I've Used My Bible for a Roadmap	King 1377	9
My Shepherd is God	King 1377	9
Your Tears Are Just Interest on the Loan	King 1390	3
Dixie Breakdown	King 1390	10
I'm Building a Mansion in Heaven	King 1409	9

Table A-38: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Springtime in Heaven	King 1409	9
I'm the Biggest Liar in Town	King 1433	2
Mack's Hoedown	King 1433	10
It's Grand to Have Someone to Love You	King 1458	1
Charlotte Breakdown	King 1458	10
Barefoot Nellie	King 1470	7
How I Miss My Darling	King 1473	6
Jesus is Waiting	King 1473	9
Reno Ride	King 1490	10
Trail of Sorrow	King 1509	2
Double Banjo Blues	King 1509	10
Family Altar	King 4875	6
I'm So Happy	King 4875	9
Limestone Blues	King 4907	10
Let's Live for Tonight	King 4907	1
Old Home Place	King 4921	6
Banjo Riff	King 4921	10
Jesus Answers My Prayers	King 4944	9
Get Behind Me Satan	King 4944	9
Cruel Love	King 4962	2
Hen Scratchin' Stomp	King 4962	10
All I Have is Just a Memory	King 5105	2
Banjo Signal	King 5105	10
Springtime in Dear Old Dixie	King 5126	6
Always Be Kind to Your Mother	King 5126	6

Source: Gary B. Reid and Bill Vernon, Don Reno and Red Smiley and the Tennessee Cut-Ups, 1951-1959 (Dearborn: Highland Music, Inc.) 4-11.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-39: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Shelton Brothers, 1939-1941

Song	Release Number	Category*
Just Because You're From Deep Elem	Decca 5665	3
You Can't Put That Monkey on My Back, No. 2	Decca 5665	3
I Just Don't Care Anymore	Decca 5669	4
That's No Way to Treat A Man In Love	Decca 5678	7
How Times Have Changed	Decca 5690	7
You Can't Do That to Me	Decca 5690	7
Pretty Little Girl With a Smile, The	Decca 5700	1
She's My Gal (Right or Wrong)	Decca 5700	7
Bye Bye Baby Bye Bye	Decca 5706	3
That's Why I'm Jealous of You	Decca 5706	1
(Aye, Aye) On Mexico's Beautiful Shore	Decca 5709	7
You Gotta Quit Cheatin' on Me	Decca 5709	3
Hallelujah I'm Gonna Be Free Again	Decca 5717	7
You Can't fool a Fool all the Time	Decca 5723	3
Dig Me a Grave In Missouri	Decca 5739	6
My Grandfather's Clock	Decca 5739	7
Lay Your Hand in Mine	Decca 5755	8
Parking Meter Blues	Decca 5755	8
No Matter What They Say	Decca 5760	2
Shoutin' in the Amen Corner (Rhythmic Sermon)	Decca 5760	9
I Have My Bed	Decca 5776	8
You Can't Get Love (Where There Ain't No Love)	Decca 5776	7
Don't Take My Darling Away	Decca 5787	N/A
If You Don't Like Peaches (Leave My Tree Alone)	Decca 5787	N/A
Don't Leave Me All Alone	Decca 5795	2
I Wish It Wasn't So	Decca 5795	2
Ain't No Use to Worry Anymore	Decca 5811	3
Old Age Pension Blues	Decca 5811	7
There'll Always be a Maple on the Hill	Decca 5826	6
You Can't Get Me Back When I'm Gone	Decca 5826	3
Coo See Coo	Decca 5833	1
I'm a Handy Man to have Around	Decca 5833	7
Doggone Crazy Blues	Decca 5844	5
I'll Be Seeing You in Dallas Alice	Decca 5844	1
Somebody Stole My Little Darling	Decca 5855	2
Tell Me With Your Blue Eyes	Decca 5855	2
It's a Weary World Without My Blue Eyes	Decca 5865	2
It's Hard to Love and Not Be Loved	Decca 5865	3
Henpecked Husband Blues	Decca 5898	7

Table A-39: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
What's the Matter With Deep Elem	Decca 5898	7
Ida Red	Decca 5946	7
South	Decca 5946	6
Rompin' and Stompin' Around	Decca 5964	3
Who's Gonna Cut My Baby's Kindling	Decca 5964	7
Love Me Easy (Or Leave Me Alone)	Decca 5975	3
Old Fashioned Locket	Decca 5975	2
I Just Can't Go	Decca 5996	7
Sittin' On Your Doorstep	Decca 5996	2
I'll Never Get Drunk Anymore	Decca 6021	2
Weary	Decca 6021	2
I'm Driftin' and Shiftin' Gears	Decca 6047	3
When It Rains It Really Pours	Decca 6047	2
Choo Choo Blues	Decca 6071	8
I Just Dropped In to Say Goodbye	Decca 6071	3
Beautiful Brown Eyes	Decca 6079	8

Source: Cary Ginell, The Decca Hillbilly Discography (Westport: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1989) 255-256.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-40: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Carl Smith, 1950-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Guilty Conscience	Columbia 20712	3
Washin' My Dreams in Tears	Columbia 20712	3
I Betcha My Heart I Love You	Columbia 20741	1
I Overlooked an Orchid (While Searching for a Rose)	Columbia 20741	2
This Side of Heaven	Columbia 20765	1
I Won't Be at Home	Columbia 20765	3
There's Nothing as Sweet as My Baby	Columbia 20796	1
Let's Live a Little	Columbia 20796	1
If Teardrops Were Pennies	Columbia 20825	2
Mr. Moon	Columbia 20825	1
Me and My Broken Heart	Columbia 20862	2
Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way	Columbia 20862	1
(When You Feel Like You're in Love) Don't Just Stand There	Columbia 20893	7
The Little Girl in My Hometown	Columbia 20893	2
Are You Teasing Me	Columbia 20922	3
It's a Lovely, Lovely World	Columbia 20922	1
Softly and Tenderly	Columbia 20986	9
Amazing Grace	Columbia 20986	9
Our Honeymoon	Columbia 21008	1
Sing Her a Love Song	Columbia 21008	1
The Blood That Stained the Old Rugged Cross	Columbia 21040	9
Gethsemane	Columbia 21040	9
My Lonely Heart's Running Wild	Columbia 21051	2
That's the Kind of Love I'm Looking For	Columbia 21051	1
This Orchid Means Goodbye (Orchids Mean Goodbye)	Columbia 21087	4
Just Wait Till I Get You Alone	Columbia 21087	1
The Nail-Scarred Hand	Columbia 21110	9
We Shall Meet Some Day	Columbia 21110	9
Trademark	Columbia 21119	7
Do I Like It?	Columbia 21119	1
Darlin' Am I the One	Columbia 21129	2
Hey Joe!	Columbia 21129	7
Satisfaction Guaranteed	Columbia 21166	1
Who'll Buy the Heartaches	Columbia 21166	2
How About You	Columbia 21192	9
I'll Be List'ning	Columbia 21192	9
What Am I Going to do With You?	Columbia 21197	4
Dog-Gone It, Baby, I'm In Love	Columbia 21197	1
If You Tried as Hard to Love Me (As You Do to Break My Heart)	Columbia 21226	2

Table A-40: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Back Up Buddy	Columbia 21226	7
Love Oh Crazy Love	Columbia 21233	7
Time's a Wastin'	Columbia 21233	1

Source: Otto Kitsinger and Richard Weize, "Carl Smith: The Columbia Discography," Carl Smith: Satisfaction Guaranteed, by Charles K. Wolfe (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996) 30, 34.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-41: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Hank Snow, 1947-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Star Spangled Waltz, The	RCA Victor 21-0062	2
Marriage Vow	RCA Victor 21-0062	1
Blind Boy's Dog, The	RCA Victor 21-0089	8
Anniversary of My Broken Heart, The	RCA Victor 21-0089	2
My Filipino Rose	RCA Victor 21-0101	2
Law of Love, The	RCA Victor 21-0101	2
Only Rose, The	RCA Victor 21-0143	2
Nobody's Child	RCA Victor 21-0143	6
I Wonder Where You Are Tonight	RCA Victor 21-0303	2
With This Ring I Thee Wed	RCA Victor 21-0328	2
I'm Movin' On	RCA Victor 21-0328	5
Night I Stole Old Sammy Morgan's Gin, The	RCA Victor 21-0356	7
I Cried But My Tears Were Too Late	RCA Victor 21-0356	8
My Two-Timin' Woman	RCA Victor 21-0363	7
Wasted Love	RCA Victor 21-0363	2
Within This Broken Heart of Mine	RCA Victor 21-0364	2
Somewhere Along Life's Highway	RCA Victor 21-0364	3
Paving the Highway With Tears	RCA Victor 21-0400	2
Golden Rocket, The	RCA Victor 21-0400	6
Rhumba Boogie, The	RCA Victor 21-0431	7
You Pass Me By	RCA Victor 21-0431	3
Down the Trail Of Achin' Hearts	RCA Victor 21-0441	2
Bluebird Island	RCA Victor 21-0441	1
Your Locket is My Broken Heart	RCA Victor 21-0498	2
Unwanted Sign Upon Your Heart	RCA Victor 21-0498	3
Golden River	RCA Victor 20-3070	2
Little Buddy	RCA Victor 20-3240	6
Wreck of Old 97, The	RCA Victor 20-4095	8
Hobo Bill's Last Ride	RCA Victor 20-4095	8
Engineer's Child, The	RCA Victor 20-4096	6
Ben Dewberry's Final Run	RCA Victor 20-4096	8
Mystery of Number Five, The	RCA Victor 20-4097	6
One More Ride	RCA Victor 20-4097	5
Music Makin' Mama From Memphis	RCA Victor 20-4346	7
Highest Bidder, The	RCA Victor 20-4346	3
These Things Shall Pass	RCA Victor 20-4398	9
Pray	RCA Victor 20-4398	9
Gold Rush is Over, The	RCA Victor 20-4522	3
Why Do You Punish Me (For Loving You)	RCA Victor 20-4522	2
My Mother	RCA Victor 20-4632	6
I Just Telephone Upstairs	RCA Victor 20-4632	9
Married By the Bible, Divorced By the Law	RCA Victor 20-4733	8

Table A-41: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Lady's Man	RCA Victor 20-4733	7
Jesus Wept	RCA Victor 20-4856	9
I'm In Love With Jesus	RCA Victor 20-4856	9
I Went to Your Wedding	RCA Victor 20-4909	2
Boogie Woogie Flying Cloud, The	RCA Victor 20-4909	7
Zeb Turner's Gal	RCA Victor 20-4973	7
Moanin'	RCA Victor 20-4974	2
I Knew That We'd Meet Again	RCA Victor 20-4974	1
(I Wished Upon) My Little Golden Horseshoe	RCA Victor 20-4975	1
Yodeling Cowboy	RCA Victor 20-4975	5
Confused With the Blues	RCA Victor 20-4976	2
On That Old Hawaiian Shore With You	RCA Victor 20-4976	2
Broken Hearted	RCA Victor 20-5006	2
I'm Movin' On to Glory	RCA Victor 20-5021	9
He'll Understand and Say Well Done	RCA Victor 20-5021	9
Love Entered the Iron Door	RCA Victor 20-5028	8
(Now and Then There's) A Fool Such As I	RCA Victor 20-5034	2
Gal Who Invented Kissin', The	RCA Victor 20-5034	7
There Wasn't An Organ At Our Wedding	RCA Victor 20-5155	1
Honeymoon on a Rocket Ship	RCA Victor 20-5155	7
My Blue Eyed Jane	RCA Victor 20-5220	1
Jimmie the Kid	RCA Victor 20-5220	7
When Jimmie Rodgers Said Goodbye	RCA Victor 20-5221	8
Anniversary Blue Yodel (Blue Yodel Number 7)	RCA Victor 20-5222	5
Southern Cannonball	RCA Victor 20-5222	7
Why Did You Give Me Your Love	RCA Victor 20-5223	2
Mississippi River Blues	RCA Victor 20-5223	6
In Daddy's Footsteps	RCA Victor 20-5249	6
Gloryland March, The	RCA Victor 20-5249	9
Spanish Fire Ball	RCA Victor 20-5296	7
Between Fire and Water	RCA Victor 20-5296	2
Christmas Roses	RCA Victor 20-5340	1
Reindeer Boogie, The	RCA Victor 20-5340	7
Silent Night	RCA Victor 20-5341	9
Frosty the Snowman	RCA Victor 20-5341	7
Message From the Tradewinds, A	RCA Victor 20-5380	2
For Now and Always	RCA Victor 20-5380	1
When Mexican Joe Met Jole Blon	RCA Victor 20-5490	7
No Longer a Prisoner	RCA Victor 20-5490	8
I'm Glad I'm on the Inside (Looking Out)	RCA Victor 20-5548	9
Invisible Hands	RCA Victor 20-5548	9
Panama	RCA Victor 20-5592	7

Table A-41: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Act 1, Act 2, Act 3	RCA Victor 20-5592	2
I Don't Hurt Anymore	RCA Victor 20-5698	3
My Arabian Baby	RCA Victor 20-5698	7
My Religion's Not Old-Fashioned (But It's Real Genuine)	RCA Victor 20-5794	9
Alphabet, The	RCA Victor 20-5794	9
Next Voice You Hear, The	RCA Victor 20-5912	3
Let Me Go Lover	RCA Victor 20-5960	3
I've Forgotten You	RCA Victor 20-5960	2
Silver Bell	RCA Victor 20-5995	10
Old Spinning Wheel, The	RCA Victor 20-5995	10
Would You Mind?	RCA Victor 20-6057	7
Yellow Roses	RCA Victor 20-6057	3
Would You Mind	RCA Victor 20-6057	7
I'm Glad I Got to See You Again	RCA Victor 20-6154	2
Cryin' Prayin' Waitin' Hopin'	RCA Victor 20-6154	2
Mainliner	RCA Victor 20-6269	3
Born to Be Happy	RCA Victor 20-6269	2
Blossoms in the Springtime	RCA Victor 20-6467	1
Just Keep A-Movin'	RCA Victor 20-6467	3
Stolen Moments	RCA Victor 20-6715	4
Unfaithful	RCA Victor 20-7060	2
Love's Call From the Mountain	RCA Victor 20-7123	1
I'm Hurting All Over	RCA Victor 20-7233	2
Big Wheels	RCA Victor 20-7233	6

Sources: Richard Weize, "Hank Snow—The Discography," Hank Snow, the Yodeling Ranger: The Canadian Years, 1936-1947, by Charles K. Wolfe (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1993) 46; Richard Weize, "The Recording Information," Hank Snow, The Singing Ranger: 1949-1953 (Vollersode: Bear Family Records, 1988) 5-7; The Billboard, various issues, 1954-1955.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-42: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by the Stanley Brothers, 1947-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Rambler's Blues	Rich-R-Tone 418	5
Molly and Tenbrooks	Rich-R-Tone 418	7
Mother No Longer Awaits at Home	Rich-R-Tone 420	6
Girl Behind the Bar, The	Rich-R-Tone 420	8
Little Maggie	Rich-R-Tone 423	3
Little Glass of Wine	Rich-R-Tone 423	8
Jealous Lover	Rich-R-Tone 435	8
Our Darling's Gone	Rich-R-Tone 435	8
Death is Only a Dream	Rich-R-Tone 446	9
I Can Tell You the Time	Rich-R-Tone 446	9
White Dove, The	Columbia 20577	6
Gathering Flowers for the Master's Bouquet	Columbia 20577	9
Little Glass of Wine	Columbia 20590	8
Let Me Be Your Friend	Columbia 20590	2
Angels are Singing in Heaven Tonight	Columbia 20617	8
It's Never Too Late to Start Over	Columbia 20617	2
Vision of Mother, A	Columbia 20647	6
Have You Someone (In Heaven Waiting)	Columbia 20647	9
Old Home, The	Columbia 20667	6
Fields Have Turned Brown, The	Columbia 20667	6
I Love No One But You	Columbia 20697	2
Too Late to Cry	Columbia 20697	2
We'll Be Sweethearts in Heaven	Columbia 20735	2
Drunkard's Hell, The	Columbia 20735	8
Hey! Hey! Hey!	Columbia 20770	1
Pretty Polly	Columbia 20770	8
Lonesome River, The	Columbia 20816	2
I'm a Man of Constant Sorrow	Columbia 20816	5
Sweetest Love	Columbia 20953	2
Wandering Boy	Columbia 20953	6
Are You Waiting For Me	Rich-R-Tone 1055	8
Little Girl and the Dreadful Snake	Rich-R-Tone 1055	8
Little Glass of Wine	Rich-R-Tone 1056	8
Little Birdie	Rich-R-Tone 1056	8
Weary Heart You Stole Away, The	Mercury 70217	2
I'm Lonesome Without You	Mercury 70217	2
(Say) Won't You Be Mine	Mercury 70270	2
Our Last Goodbye	Mercury 70270	2
I Long to See the Old Folks	Mercury 70340	6

Table A-42: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Voice From On High, A	Mercury 70340	9
Memories of Mother	Mercury 70400	6
Could You Love Me (One More Time)	Mercury 70400	2
Poison Lies	Mercury 70437	3
Dickson County Breakdown	Mercury 70437	10
I Just Got Wise	Mercury 70453	3
Blue Moon of Kentucky	Mercury 70453	2
Calling From Heaven	Mercury 70483	9
Harbor of Love	Mercury 70483	9
Hard Times	Mercury 70546	10
I Worship You	Mercury 70546	2
Nobody's Love is Like Mine	Mercury 70789	3
Baby Girl	Mercury 70886	6
Say You'll Take Me Back	Mercury 70886	2

Source: Gary B. Reid, The Stanley Brothers: A Preliminary Discography (Copper Creek: Copper Creek Publications, 1984): n.p.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-43: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Hank Thompson, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Swing Wide Your Gate Of Love	Globe 124	1
Whoa Sailor	Globe 124	7
California Women	Blue Bonnet 123	7
What Are You Gonna Do About the Moonlight	Blue Bonnet 123	7
Lonely Heart Knows, A	Blue Bonnet 107	2
Starry Eyed Texas Gal	Blue Bonnet 107	1
Yesterday's Mail	Capitol 15132	2
What Are You Gonna Do About the Moonlight	Capitol 15132	7
You Remembered Me	Capitol 15187	2
Green Light, The	Capitol 15187	3
My Heart is a Jigsaw Puzzle	Capitol 15296	2
Second Hand Gal	Capitol 15296	3
I Find You Cheatin' On Me	Capitol 15345	3
You Broke My Heart (In Tiny Little Pieces)	Capitol 15345	2
Humpty Dumpty Heart	Capitol 40065	7
Today	Capitol 40065	2
Don't Flirt With Me	Capitol 40085	3
Rock in the Ocean	Capitol 40085	2
Mary Had a Little Lamb (His Love Was Pure As Snow)	Capitol 40112	7
California Women	Capitol 40112	7
Tomorrow Night	Capitol 40169	2
My Front Door is Open	Capitol 40169	1
Soft Lips	Capitol 40211	1
Grass Looks Greener Over Yonder, The	Capitol 40211	3
Swing Wide Your Gate of Love	Capitol 40218	1
Whoa Sailor	Capitol 40218	7
Give a Little, Take A Little	Capitol 40264	1
Cat Has Nine Lives, A	Capitol 40264	2
All that Goes Up Must Come Down	Capitol 876	3
Standing on the Outside Looking In Now	Capitol 876	2
She's a Girl Without a Sweetheart	Capitol 1016	2
Take a Look at This Broken Heart of Mine	Capitol 1016	7
Can't Feel At Home in This World Any More	Capitol 1163	9
When God Calls His Children Home	Capitol 1163	9
Daddy Blues	Capitol 1198	3
Humpty Dumpty Boogie	Capitol 1198	10
If I Cry	Capitol 1327	2
Broken Heart and a Glass of Beer, A	Capitol 1327	4
New Rovin' Gambler	Capitol 1379	5
Playin' Possum	Capitol 1379	7
Where is Your Heart Tonight	Capitol 1444	2
Those Things Money Can't Buy	Capitol 1444	2
Hangover Heart	Capitol 1528	2
I Ain't Cryin' Over You	Capitol 1528	3
How Do You Feel	Capitol 1745	2
Love Thief	Capitol 1745	1

Table A-43: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
I'll Be Your Sweetheart For a Day	Capitol 1870	5
Teardrops on the Tea Leaves	Capitol 1870	2
Wild Side of Life, The	Capitol 1942	2
Cryin' in the Deep Blue Sea	Capitol 1942	2
Waiting in the Lobby of Your Heart	Capitol 2063	2
Don't Make Me Cry Again	Capitol 2063	3
It's Better to Have Loved a Little	Capitol 2169	3
How Cold Hearted Can You Get	Capitol 2169	7
New Wears Off Too Fast, The	Capitol 2269	3
You're Walking On My Heart	Capitol 2269	7
I'd Have Never Found Somebody New	Capitol 2376	3
No Help Wanted	Capitol 2376	7
Rub-a-Dub-Dub	Capitol 2445	7
I'll Sign My Heart Away	Capitol 2445	2
Yesterday's Girl	Capitol 2553	6
John Henry	Capitol 2553	5
Go Cry Your Heart Out	Capitol 2646	7
Wake Up Irene	Capitol 2646	7
Fooler, A Faker, A	Capitol 2758	3
Breakin' the Rules	Capitol 2758	4
Jersey Bounce	Capitol 2792	10
Sunrise Serenade	Capitol 2792	10
We've Gone Too Far	Capitol 2823	4
Honky Tonk Girl	Capitol 2823	6
A Lonely Heart Knows	Capitol 2920	2
New Green Light	Capitol 2920	3
Johnson Rag	Capitol 2998	10
Dardanella	Capitol 2998	10
If Lovin' You Is Wrong	Capitol 3030	1
Annie Over	Capitol 3030	1
Breakin' In Another Heart	Capitol 3106	3
Wildwood Flower	Capitol 3106	10
Simple Simon	Capitol 3188	N/A
Most of All	Capitol 3188	N/A
Tears Are Only Rain	Capitol 3781	6

Source: Richard Weize, and Laurence J. Zwisohn with Rich Kienzle, "Hank Thompson, The Discography, 1946-1964," Rich Kienzle, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, 1946-1964 (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1996): 68-69.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-44: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Floyd Tillman, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Drivin' Nails in My Coffin	Columbia 36998	4
Some Other World	Columbia 36998	8
Go Out and Find Somebody New	Columbia 37221	3
Sign on the Dotted Line	Columbia 37221	3
Gotta Have Somethin'	Columbia 37393	7
Sweetheart Darlin'	Columbia 37393	N/A
Same Old Blues, The	Columbia 37826	2
It's A Cruel, Cruel World For Me	Columbia 37826	4
I'm Leaving This Old World Someday	Columbia 37976	4
It's Got Me Down	Columbia 37976	4
Houston Waltz	Columbia 38086	2
Westphalia Waltz	Columbia 38086	10
This Cold War With You	Columbia 20165	3
I'll Take What I Can Get	Columbia 20430	4
I Love You So Much It Hurts	Columbia 20430	1
Please Don't Pass Me By	Columbia 20496	2
Cold Cold Woman	Columbia 20496	7
Drinking and Thinking	Columbia 20532	4
Gals Are Funny That Way	Columbia 20532	7
You Made Me Live, Love and Die	Columbia 20581	2
Slipping Around	Columbia 20581	4
I'll Never Slip Around Again	Columbia 20615	4
I Gotta Have My Baby Back	Columbia 20641	4
It Had to Be That Way	Columbia 20641	3
I Almost Lost My Mind	Columbia 20673	2
Precious Memory	Columbia 20673	2
The Last Straw	Columbia 20694	3
Just As Long As I Have You	Columbia 20694	1
The Grandest Prize	Columbia 20746	7
I've Got the Craziest Feeling	Columbia 20746	4
I'm Falling For You	Columbia 20771	1
Each Night at Nine	Columbia 20771	8
I Don't Care Anymore	Columbia 20793	3
I Love You Just As You Are	Columbia 20793	1
Rose of Old Monterey	Columbia 20823	1
You're That to Me	Columbia 20823	1
I'll Be Playing the Field From Now On	Columbia 20860	2
Why Do I Drink	Columbia 20860	4
Don't Say You Love Me, Just Show It	Columbia 20894	1

Table A-44: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
I'll Still Be Loving You	Columbia 20894	2
Take My Love With You Too	Columbia 20956	3
It's Over, All Over	Columbia 20956	4
Goodbye Tomorrow, Hello Yesterday	Columbia 21004	2
I Finally Saw the Light	Columbia 21004	1
The Worm Has Turned	Columbia 21076	3
A Small Little Town	Columbia 21076	4
More Than Anything	Columbia 21200	1
Just One More Time	Columbia 21200	8
I'll Never Be the Same (Without You)	Columbia 21257	2
Call on Me (And I'll Be There)	Columbia 21257	1
One More Day, Wasted Away	Columbia 21303	2
Sometime, Somewhere, Somehow	Columbia 21303	2
She's Long Gone	Columbia 21372	7
Let's Make Memories Tonight	Columbia 21372	3

Source: Adam Komorowski, "Floyd Tillman," Hillbilly Researcher No. 15 (1992): 19-22.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-45: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Merle Travis, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
I'm a Natural Born Gamblin' Man	Capitol 15143	5
Crazy Boogie	Capitol 15143	7
Leave My Honey Bee Alone	Capitol 15212	7
T for Texas (Blue Yodel #1)	Capitol 15212	5
Divorce Me C.O.D.	Capitol 15263	3
Cincinnati Lou	Capitol 15264	7
No Vacancy	Capitol 15265	8
Missouri	Capitol 15265	6
Dapper Dan	Capitol 15317	5
What a Shame	Capitol 15317	3
Sweet Temptation	Capitol 349	7
So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed	Capitol 349	7
Three Times Seven	Capitol 384	5
Steel Guitar Rag	Capitol 384	7
I'm Sick and Tired of You, Little Darling	Capitol 40006	3
Lawdy, What a Gal	Capitol 40006	7
Fat Gal	Capitol 40026	7
Merle's Boogie Woogie	Capitol 40026	7
Follow Thru	Capitol 40050	3
I Like My Chicken Fryin' Size	Capitol 40050	7
The Devil to Pay	Capitol 40072	3
Information Please	Capitol 40072	7
When My Baby Double Talks to Me	Capitol 40100	7
Kentucky Means Paradise	Capitol 40100	6
Alimony Bound	Capitol 40115	3
A Fool at the Steering Wheel	Capitol 40115	6
Get Along Blues	Capitol 40171	7
Walkin' the Strings	Capitol 40214	10
Fuller Blues	Capitol 40214	10
Blue Smoke	Capitol 40214	10
Blues Stay Away From Me	Capitol 40254	2
Philosophy	Capitol 40254	7
I'm Picking Up the Pieces of My Heart	Capitol 40272	2
Petticoat Fever	Capitol 40272	7
Nine-Pound Hammer	Capitol 48000	5
John Henry	Capitol 48000	5
Sixteen Tons	Capitol 48001	5
Dark as a Dungeon	Capitol 48001	5
Over By Number Nine	Capitol 48002	5
That's All	Capitol 48002	7
Muskrat	Capitol 48003	7
I Am a Pilgrim	Capitol 48003	9

Table A-45: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Sioux City Sue	Capitol 48004	7
I Got a Mean Old Woman	Capitol 965	2
Start Even	Capitol 965	4
Guitar Fever	Capitol 1029	7
Cane Botton Chair	Capitol 1029	5
Too Much Sugar for a Dime	Capitol 1146	7
Spoonin' Moon	Capitol 1146	7
Trouble, Trouble	Capitol 1241	4
El Reno	Capitol 1241	6
Wont'cha Be My Baby	Capitol 1337	7
Dry Bread	Capitol 1337	7
Deep South	Capitol 1519	6
Boogie in Minor	Capitol 1519	2
Lost John Boogie	Capitol 1737	7
Let's Settle Down (To Runnin' Around Together)	Capitol 1737	1
Done Rovin'	Capitol 1800	1
Faithful Fool	Capitol 1800	2
Kinfolks in Carolina	Capitol 2014	6
Rainy Day Feelin'	Capitol 2014	4
A Too Fast Past	Capitol 2136	6
Ain't That a Cryin' Shame	Capitol 2136	2
I'll See You in My Dreams	Capitol 2245	10
Cannon Ball Rag	Capitol 2245	10
Knee Deep in Trouble	Capitol 2336	2
Bayou Baby (A Cajun Lullaby)	Capitol 2336	1
I'll Have Myself a Ball	Capitol 2453	7
Green Cheese	Capitol 2453	7
Gambler's Guitar	Capitol 2544	5
Shut Up and Drink Your Beer	Capitol 2544	7
Re-Enlistment Blues	Capitol 2563	7
Dance of the Golden Rod	Capitol 2563	1
Jolie Fille (Pretty Girl)	Capitol 2757	7
I Can't Afford the Coffee (I'm Tired of Drinkin' Weak Tea Blues)	Capitol 2757	7
Love Must Be Ketchin'	Capitol 2902	7
Louisiana Boogie	Capitol 2902	7

Source: Patrick Milligan, Richard Weize and Laurence J. Zwisohn, "Merle Travis: The Discography,, 1943-1955," Merle Travis: Guitar Rags and a Too Fast Past (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1994) 68-78.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-46: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Ernest Tubb, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
You Were Only Teasing Me	Decca 46013	3
Rainbow at Midnight	Decca 46018	8
I Don't Blame You	Decca 46018	4
Filipino Baby	Decca 46019	7
Drivin' Nails in My Coffin	Decca 46019	4
I'm Free At Last	Decca 46030	3
Those Simple Things Are Worth a Million Now	Decca 46030	4
How Can I Be Sure	Decca 46032	3
Those Tears In Your Eyes (Were Not For Me)	Decca 46032	3
So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed	Decca 46040	7
Don't Look Now (But Your Broken Heart Is Showing)	Decca 46040	3
There's Gonna Be Some Changes Made Around Here	Decca 46041	3
You Hit the Nail Right on the Head	Decca 46061	3
Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right	Decca 46061	2
Answer to Rainbow at Midnight	Decca 46078	8
Headin' Down the Wrong Highway	Decca 46078	4
Lonely Heart Knows, A	Decca 46113	3
A W-o-m-a-n Has Wrecked Many a Good Man	Decca 46113	7
Seaman's Blues	Decca 46119	8
Waiting for a Train	Decca 46119	5
That Wild and Wicked Look in Your Eye	Decca 46134	3
Forever is Ending Today	Decca 46134	2
Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello	Decca 46144	3
Have You Ever Been Lonely (Have You Ever Been Blue)?	Decca 46144	2
Till the End of the World	Decca 46150	1
Daddy, When is Mommy Coming Home	Decca 46150	6
My Tennessee Baby	Decca 46173	7
Slipping Around	Decca 46173	4
My Filipino Rose	Decca 46175	2
Warm Red Wine	Decca 46175	4
White Christmas	Decca 46186	6
Blue Christmas	Decca 46186	2
Tennessee Border, Number Two	Decca 46200	7
Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age	Decca 46200	7
Letters Have No Arms	Decca 46207	1
I'll Take a Back Seat for You	Decca 46207	1
I Love You Because	Decca 46213	1
Unfaithful One	Decca 46213	3
Throw Your Love My Way	Decca 46243	7

Table A-46: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Give Me An Old Fashioned Love	Decca 46243	6
Hillbilly Fever, Number Two	Decca 46255	7
Goodnight Irene	Decca 46255	7
G-i-r-l Spells Trouble	Decca 46257	7
You Don't Have to Be a Baby to Cry	Decca 46257	2
Christmas Island	Decca 46268	7
C-h-r-i-s-t-m-a-s	Decca 46268	9
(Remember Me) I'm the One Who Loves You	Decca 46269	1
I Need Attention Bad	Decca 46269	7
Texas Vs. Kentucky	Decca 46278	7
Lovebug Itch, The	Decca 46278	7
May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You	Decca 46295	9
When It's Prayer Meetin' Time in the Hollow	Decca 46295	6
Don't Stay Too Long	Decca 46296	1
If You Want Some Lovin'	Decca 46296	7
So Long (It's Been Good to Know Yuh)	Decca 46297	7
Chicken Song, The	Decca 46297	7
Mother, the Queen of My Heart	Decca 46306	6
I'm Lonely and Blue	Decca 46306	2
Why Did You Give Me Your Love?	Decca 46307	2
I'm Free From the Chain Gang Now	Decca 46307	5
Why Should I Be Lonely?	Decca 46308	2
Hobo's Meditation	Decca 46308	5
Drunkard's Child, A	Decca 46309	6
Any Old Time	Decca 46309	3
Strange Little Girl, The	Decca 46311	6
Kentucky Waltz	Decca 46311	2
Hey La La	Decca 46338	8
Precious Little Baby	Decca 46338	1
Rose of the Mountain	Decca 46343	1
I'm With a Crowd But So Alone	Decca 46343	2
Driftwood on the River	Decca 46377	4
I'm Stepping Out of the Picture	Decca 46377	2
I'm In Love With Molly	Decca 46387	7
Too Old To Cut the Mustard	Decca 46387	7
Heartsick Soldier on Heartbreak Ridge, A	Decca 46389	8
Missing in Action	Decca 46389	8

Table A-46: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Stand By Me	Decca 14506	9
When I Take My Vacation In Heaven	Decca 14506	9
What a Friend We Have In Jesus	Decca 14515	9
Wonderful City, The	Decca 14515	9
Old Rugged Cross, The	Decca 14532	9
Farther Along	Decca 14532	9
Don't Rob Another Man's Castle	Decca 24592	6
I'm Biting My Nails and Thinking of You	Decca 24592	7
My Mother Must Have Been a Girl Like You	Decca 28067	1
Somebody's Stole My Honey	Decca 28067	3
So Many Times	Decca 28310	2
Fortunes in Dreams	Decca 28310	2
Somebody Loves You	Decca 28448	1
Don't Trifle on Your Sweetheart	Decca 28448	4
Merry Texas Christmas, You All!	Decca 28453	7
Blue Snowflakes	Decca 28453	7
I Will Miss You When I Go	Decca 28550	2
Dear Judge	Decca 28550	6
Hank, It Will Never Be the Same Without You	Decca 28630	8
Beyond the Sunset	Decca 28630	1
No Help Wanted, Number Two	Decca 28634	7
You're a Real Good Friend	Decca 28634	7
When Jimmie Rodgers Said Goodbye	Decca 28696	8
Jimmie Rodgers Last Thoughts	Decca 28696	6
Don't Brush Them on Me	Decca 28777	4
My Wasted Past	Decca 28777	4
Dear John Letter, A	Decca 28837	8
Counterfeit Kisses	Decca 28869	3
Divorce Granted	Decca 28869	3
Too Old to Tango	Decca 28911	7
Doctor Ketchum	Decca 28911	7
We Need God For Christmas	Decca 28946	8
I'm Trimming My Christmas Tree with Teardrops	Decca 28946	2
Honky Tonk Heart	Decca 29011	3
I'm Not Looking For an Angel	Decca 29011	6
Till We Two are One	Decca 29020	1
Jealous Loving Heart	Decca 29020	7
Your Mother, Your Darling, Your Friend	Decca 29103	6

Table A-46: (continued)

Baby Your Mother (Like She Babied You)	Decca 29103	6
Double Datin'	Decca 29195	7
It's the Mileage That's Slowin' Us Down	Decca 29195	7
Two Glasses, Joe	Decca 29220	4
Journey's End	Decca 29220	2
Lonely Christmas Eve	Decca 29350	2
I'll Be Walking the Floor This Christmas	Decca 29350	7
Woman's Touch, The	Decca 29415	1
Kansas City Blues	Decca 29415	7
I Met a Friend	Decca 29624	9
When Jesus Calls	Decca 29624	9

Source: Ronnie F. Pugh, Ernest Tubb: The Texas Troubadour (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 373-387.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-47: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Jimmy Wakely, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
White Cross on Okinawa	Decca 9004	8
Blue, Blue Eyes	Decca 46017	1
Texas Tornado	Decca 46017	7
One Has My Name (The Other Has My Heart)	Capitol 15162	4
You're the Sweet Rose In Texas	Capitol 15162	1
Mine All Mine	Capitol 15236	1
Walk the Sidewalks of Shame	Capitol 15236	4
I Love You So Much It Hurts	Capitol 15243	2
I Don't Want Your Sympathy	Capitol 15243	3
Forever More	Capitol 15333	2
Think of Me Thinking of You	Capitol 15333	3
Till the End of the World	Capitol 15368	1
Moon Over Montana	Capitol 15368	5
Somebody's Rose	Capitol 360	1
Everybody Knew It But Me	Capitol 360	2
Too Many Sweethearts	Capitol 414	3
I'm Gonna Marry Mary	Capitol 414	1
I Heard You Talkin'	Capitol 40016	3
Song of the Sierras	Capitol 40016	6
Here Today and Gone Tomorrow	Capitol 40040	2
I Can't Keep the Tears Out of My Eyes	Capitol 40040	2
Sweethearts on Parade	Capitol 40059	2
When the Moon Plays Peekaboo	Capitol 40059	1
Oklahoma Blues	Capitol 40078	6
Night After Night	Capitol 40078	2
Signed, Sealed, Delivered	Capitol 40088	2
Easy to Please	Capitol 40088	7
Bouquet of Roses	Capitol 40107	2
Milk Cow Blues	Capitol 40107	3
Are You Ashamed?	Capitol 40125	3
For the Sake of Days Gone By	Capitol 40125	2
Someday You'll Call My Name	Capitol 40153	3
I Wish I Had A Nickel	Capitol 40153	3
Tellin' My Troubles to My Old Guitar	Capitol 40187	2
Try to Understand	Capitol 40187	2
I'll Never Slip Around Again	Capitol 40246	4
I Don't Know Why I Love You	Capitol 40252	2
You're Only In My Arms (To Cry on My Shoulder)	Capitol 40252	3
Dust	Capitol 40283	9
Touch of God's Hand	Capitol 40283	9
Oklahoma Hills	Capitol 48005	6
First Noel, The	Capitol 90014	9

Table A-47: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Silent Night	Capitol 90014	9
Joy to the World	Capitol 90015	9
O' Come All Ye Faithful	Capitol 90015	9
I Came Upon a Midnight Clear	Capitol 90016	9
O' Little Town of Bethlehem	Capitol 90016	9
If Santa Claus Could Bring You Back to Me	Capitol 90040	2
Christmas Polka	Capitol 90040	7
Broken Down Merry Go-Round	Capitol 800	7
The Gods Were Angry With Me	Capitol 800	2
Mr. Easter	Capitol 929	7
Petter Cottontail	Capitol 929	7
Why Do You Say Those Things That Hurt Me So	Capitol 960	2
Let's Go to Church Next Sunday Morning	Capitol 960	1
Under the Anheuser Bush	Capitol 1024	1
Home Town Rag	Capitol 1024	1
Close Your Pretty Eyes	Capitol 1065	1
Fool's Paradise	Capitol 1065	4
Sugar Plum Kisses	Capitol 1066	3
I Don't Have to Die to Go to Heaven	Capitol 1066	1
Steppin' Out	Capitol 1151	1
Mona Lisa	Capitol 1151	7
My Heart Knows	Capitol 1189	1
When Love Goes Wrong	Capitol 1189	2
Beyond the Reef	Capitol 1234	2
Bushel and a Peck, A	Capitol 1234	7
Pot O' Gold	Capitol 1240	9
Bandera Waltz	Capitol 1240	2
Silver Bells	Capitol 1255	6
Christmas Candy	Capitol 1255	7
Music By the Angels	Capitol 1328	6
My Heart Cries for You	Capitol 1328	2
Beautiful Brown Eyes	Capitol 1393	3
At the Close of a Long Day	Capitol 1393	1
Cryin' Just for You	Capitol 1472	2
Did You Write a Letter to Your Sweetheart	Capitol 1472	2
When You And I Were Young Maggie Blues	Capitol 1500	7
Till We Meet Again	Capitol 1500	N/A
I Like the Open Spaces	Capitol 1534	5
Old Soldiers Never Die	Capitol 1534	8
Don't Be Lonely	Capitol 1554	1
I'll Never Do a Thing to Hurt You	Capitol 1554	2
Why Am I Losing You	Capitol 1555	2

Table A-47: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Star of Hope	Capitol 1555	9
Another Fool Walks In	Capitol 1762	3
Solid South	Capitol 1762	6
I Don't Want to Be Free	Capitol 1816	2
Let's Live a Little	Capitol 1816	1
Each Step of the Way	Capitol 1838	9
Gonna Walk With My Lord	Capitol 1838	9
Keep a Light In Your Window Tonight	Capitol 1880	6
Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	Capitol 1880	7
Missing In Action	Capitol 1936	8
Just a Little More Waiting	Capitol 1936	8
Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way	Capitol 1965	1
Give Me More, More, More	Capitol 1965	1
Goodbye, Little Girl	Capitol 2028	3
Love Song of the Waterfall	Capitol 2028	1
Forgive Me	Capitol 2078	2
Just Because	Capitol 2078	3
My Heart Has Room For You	Capitol 2126	2
If You Would Only Be Mine	Capitol 2126	2
There's A Cloud in My Valley of Sunshine	Capitol 2161	2
Four-Legged Friend, A	Capitol 2161	7
When I Say Goodnight	Capitol 2172	2
There's That Same Old Lovelight in Your Eyes	Capitol 2172	2
I Went to Your Wedding	Capitol 2221	2
Pale Moon	Capitol 2221	5
When It's Harvest Time, Sweet Angeline	Capitol 2272	1
Rainbow At Midnight	Capitol 2272	8
Lorelei	Capitol 2380	2
If You Knew What It Meant to Be Lonesome	Capitol 2380	2
Gomen Nasai	Capitol 2402	2
I Learned to Love Too Late	Capitol 2402	2
Out of Sight, Out of Mind	Capitol 2484	3
This Orchid Means Goodbye	Capitol 2484	4
My Heart Knows	Capitol 2528	1
When Love Goes Wrong	Capitol 2528	2
Pride	Capitol 2626	3
Too Late	Capitol 2626	4
It's Christmas	Capitol 2644	1
Thanks	Capitol 2644	9
Tennessee Churchbells, The	Capitol 2689	2
There's a Silver Moon On the Golden Gate	Capitol 2689	N/A
If You Can't Go Right	Sterling 214	3

Table A-47: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
I've Got Nuggets in My Pockets	Sterling 214	5
I've Had My Share of Sorrow	Coral 61112	2
Red Deck of Cards	Coral 61112	8
I Love You	Coral 61134	1
I Stopped Livin'	Coral 61134	2
Ain't She Sweet	Coral 61148	N/A
Bimbo	Coral 61148	7
Bright-Eyed and Bushy-Tailed	Coral 61175	7
Twilight Time in Tennessee	Coral 61175	6
Here Lies My Heart	Coral 61220	2
It's Lonely on the Trail Tonight	Coral 61220	2
When I Stop Loving You	Coral 61276	1
You Took My Name	Coral 61276	3
Let Me Go, Lover	Coral 61320	N/A
Let the Rest of the World Go By	Coral 61320	N/A
Let's Walk into the Future	Coral 61341	1
When He Grows Tired of You	Coral 61341	3
Show Me the Way	Coral 61389	N/A
Whom God Hath Joined Together	Coral 61389	N/A
You Can't Break the Chains Of Love	Coral 64002	2
I'm Sending You Red Roses	Coral 64002	1
Blue Bonnet Blues	Coral 64006	6
I Don't Care	Coral 64006	1
Broken Heart, A	Coral 64011	2
You Go Your Way and I'll Go Mine	Coral 64011	3
Standing Outside of Heaven	Coral 64014	N/A
When I Take My Vacation in Heaven	Coral 64014	N/A
When a Speck in the Sky is a Bluebird	Coral 64022	N/A
On the Strings of My Lonesome Guitar	Coral 64022	2
Be Honest With Me	Coral 64037	N/A
Gone and Left Me Blues	Coral 64037	N/A

Source: The Billboard, various issues, 1946-1955.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-48: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Kitty Wells, 1949-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Death At the Bar	RCA Victor 21-0032	9
Gathering Flowers For the Master's Bouquet	RCA Victor 21-0032	9
Love or Hate	RCA Victor 21-0085	3
Don't Wait Till the Last Minute to Pray	RCA Victor 21-0085	9
Make Up Your Mind	RCA Victor 21-0333	3
I'll Be All Smiles Tonight	RCA Victor 21-0333	1
How Far is Heaven	RCA Victor 21-0384	6
My Mother	RCA Victor 21-0384	6
It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels	Decca 28232	3
I Don't Want Your Money, I Want Your Time	Decca 28232	1
I Heard the Jukebox Playing	Decca 28432	3
A Wedding Ring Ago	Decca 28432	3
The Things I Might Have Been	Decca 28525	1
Divided By Two	Decca 28525	2
Crying Steel Guitar Waltz	Decca 28578	2
Paying for That Back Street Affair	Decca 28578	4
Honky Tonk Waltz	Decca 28666	4
You Said You Could Do Without Me	Decca 28666	3
I Don't Claim to Be an Angel	Decca 28753	1
The Life They Live in Songs	Decca 28753	1
Hey Joe	Decca 28797	7
My Cold Cold Heart is Melted Now	Decca 28797	2
I Gave My Wedding Dress Away	Decca 28931	2
Cheatin's a Sin	Decca 28931	2
Release Me	Decca 29023	3
After Dark	Decca 29023	4
I'm A Stranger In My Home	Decca 29065	3
One By One	Decca 29065	4
You're Not Easy to Forget	Decca 29134	4
(Don't Hang Around) He's Married to Me	Decca 29134	3
Thou Shalt Not Steal	Decca 29313	4
I Hope My Divorce is Never Granted	Decca 29313	2
Make Believe	Decca 29390	2
As Long as I Live	Decca 29390	2
Whose Shoulder Will You Cry On	Decca 29419	3
I'm In Love With You	Decca 29577	2
I've Kissed You My Last Time	Decca 29728	2
Lonely Side of Town	Decca 29728	4
You and Me	Decca 29740	1
No One But You	Decca 29740	1

Source: Bob Pinson, "Discography: 1949-1958," Kitty Wells: The Queen of Country Music, by Charles K. Wolfe (Hambergen: Bear Family Records, 1993) 24-25.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-49: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Hank Williams, 1946-1952

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Calling You	Sterling 201	9
Never Again (Will I Knock on Your Door)	Sterling 201	3
Wealth Won't Save Your Soul	Sterling 204	6
When God Comes and Gathers His Jewels	Sterling 204	9
I Don't Care (If Tomorrow Never Comes)	Sterling 208	2
My Love For You (Has Turned to Hate)	Sterling 208	3
Honky Tonkin'	Sterling 210	1
Pan American	Sterling 210	6
Move It On Over	MGM 10033	7
(Last Night) I Heard You Crying In Your Sleep	MGM 10033	3
Fly Trouble	MGM 10073	7
On the Banks of the Old Ponchartrain	MGM 10073	5
Rootie Tootie	MGM 10124	7
My Sweet Love Ain't Around	MGM 10124	2
Honky Tonkin'	MGM 10171	1
I'll Be a Bachelor Till I Die	MGM 10171	7
I'm A Long Gone Daddy	MGM 10212	3
Blues Come Around, The	MGM 10212	2
I Saw the Light	MGM 10271	9
Six More Miles (To the Graveyard)	MGM 10271	8
Mansion on the Hill	MGM 10328	2
I Can't Get You Off Of My Mind	MGM 10328	3
Lovesick Blues	MGM 10352	2
Wedding Bells	MGM 10401	2
I've Just Told Mama Goodbye	MGM 10401	6
Dear Brother	MGM 10434	6
Lost on the River	MGM 10434	2
Mind Your Own Business	MGM 10461	8
There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight	MGM 10461	3
You're Gonna Change (Or I'm Gonna Leave)	MGM 10506	3
Lost Highway	MGM 10506	5
My Bucket's Got a Hole in It	MGM 10560	7
I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry	MGM 10560	2
I Just Don't Like This Kind of Livin'	MGM 10609	3
May You Never Be Alone	MGM 10609	2
Funeral, The	MGM 10630	8
Beyond the Sunset	MGM 10630	1
Long Gone Lonesome Blues	MGM 10645	2
My Son Calls Another Man Daddy	MGM 10645	5

Table A-49: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Why Don't You Love Me	MGM 10696	3
House Without Love, A	MGM 10696	3
Everything's Okay	MGM 10718	6
Too Many Parties and Too Many Pals	MGM 10718	6
They'll Never Take Her Love Away From Me	MGM 10760	4
Why Should We Try Anymore	MGM 10760	3
No, No, Joe	MGM 10806	7
Help Me Understand	MGM 10806	6
I Heard My Mother Praying For Me	MGM 10813	6
Jesus Remembered Me	MGM 10813	9
Moanin' the Blues	MGM 10832	2
Nobody's Lonesome for Me	MGM 10832	7
Cold Cold Heart	MGM 10904	3
Dear John	MGM 10904	7
Just Waitin'	MGM 10932	7
Men With Broken Hearts	MGM 10932	6
Howlin' At the Moon	MGM 10961	7
I Can't Help It (If I'm Still In Love With You)	MGM 10961	2
Hey, Good Lookin'	MGM 11000	1
My Heart Would Know	MGM 11000	2
I've Been Down That Road Before	MGM 11017	6
I Dreamed About Mama Last Night	MGM 11017	6
(I Heard That) Lonesome Whistle	MGM 11054	5
Crazy Heart	MGM 11054	2
Baby, We're Really In Love	MGM 11100	1
I'd Still Want You	MGM 11100	2
Ramblin' Man	MGM 11120	5
Pictures From Life's Other Side	MGM 11120	6
Honky Tonk Blues	MGM 11160	4
I'm Sorry For You, My Friend	MGM 11160	3
Half As Much	MGM 11202	2
Let's Turn Back the Years	MGM 11202	1
Jambalaya (On the Bayou)	MGM 11283	7
Window Shopping	MGM 11283	3
Why Don't You Make Up Your Mind	MGM 11309	3
Be Careful of Stones That You Throw	MGM 11309	6
Settin' the Woods on Fire	MGM 11318	1
You Win Again	MGM 11318	3
I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive	MGM 11366	7

Table A-49: (continued)

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
I Could Never Be Ashamed of You	MGM 11366	1
Your Cheatin' Heart	MGM 11416	3
Kaw-Liga	MGM 11416	7
Take These Chains From My Heart	MGM 11479	3
I Won't Be Home No More	MGM 11533	3
My Love for You (Has Turned to Hate)	MGM 11533	3
Weary Blues From Waitin'	MGM 11574	2
I Can't Escape From You	MGM 11574	4

Source: Colin Escott, Hank Williams: The Original Singles Collection...Plus
(New York: Polygram Records, 1990) 286-289.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-50: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Tex Williams, 1946-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Rose of the Alamo	Capitol 302	1
California Polka	Capitol 302	10
I Got Texas In My Soul	Capitol 333	5
Leaf of Love	Capitol 333	2
Roundup Polka	Capitol 40001	7
Smoke, Smoke, Smoke (That Cigarette)	Capitol 40001	7
That's What I Like About the West	Capitol 40031	7
Downtown Poker Club	Capitol 40031	7
Then You'll Know What it Means to Be Blue	Capitol 40054	3
Never Trust a Woman	Capitol 40054	7
Blue as a Heartache	Capitol 40081	2
Don't Telephone, Don't Telegraph (Tell a Woman)	Capitol 40081	7
Artistry in Western Swing	Capitol 40095	10
Happy Birthday Polka	Capitol 40095	7
Flo From Saint Joe Mo.	Capitol 40109	1
Suspicion	Capitol 40109	7
Johnstown Polka	Capitol 40159	6
Castle of My Dreams	Capitol 40159	2
Ham and Eggs	Capitol 40194	7
Cowpuncher's Waltz	Capitol 40194	1
Lady 'Round the Lady	Capitol 40201	N/A
Ocean Waves	Capitol 40202	10
Chinese Breakdown	Capitol 40202	10
Rakes of Mallow	Capitol 40203	10
A and E Rag	Capitol 40203	10
Cotton-Eyed Joe	Capitol 40206	10
Hot Pretzels	Capitol 40206	10
There's A Bluebird on Your Windowsill	Capitol 40225	6
I'm Sending You a Letter Asking for My Broken Heart	Capitol 40225	2
Crocodile Tears	Capitol 40253	3
Winter Song, The	Capitol 40253	7
With Men Who Know Tobacco Best	Capitol 40276	7
Three Little Girls Dressed in Blue	Capitol 40276	1
Miss Molly	Capitol 48006	1
Big Bass Polka	Capitol 48008	10
Cowboy Polka	Capitol 48008	10
Beer Barrel Polka	Capitol 48009	10
Banjo Polka	Capitol 48009	10
Milkman Polka	Capitol 48010	7

Table A-50: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Capitol Polka	Capitol 48010	10
Cowbell Polka	Capitol 48011	10
Yodeling Polka	Capitol 48011	10
Pretty Red Lights	Capitol 15101	7
Foolish Tears	Capitol 15113	4
Who Me?	Capitol 15113	7
Talking Boogie	Capitol 15175	7
Just a Pair of Blue Eyes	Capitol 15175	1
Big Hat Polka	Capitol 15271	10
Life Gets Teejus	Capitol 15271	7
Traveling Salesman Polka	Capitol 15312	7
Hurry Don't Delay	Capitol 15321	7
Old Paint's Complaint	Capitol 15321	7
I Cried Myself to Sleep	Capitol 15398	2
You Broke Your Promise	Capitol 15398	2
Think It Over, Boys	Capitol 761	N/A
Are You Sure	Capitol 761	N/A
How Do You Lie to a Heart	Capitol 822	2
Hundred Years From Now, A	Capitol 822	3
Ghost of a Honky Tonk Slave	Capitol 841	6
You Gotta Have a License	Capitol 841	7
Was Yesterday a Dream	Capitol 940	2
My San Fernando Rose	Capitol 940	1
Great Big Needle	Capitol 1006	2
Birmingham Bounce	Capitol 1006	7
Happy Feet	Capitol 1087	1
You Two Time Me, I'll Two Time You	Capitol 1087	3
Wild Card	Capitol 1166	7
Tamburitza Boogie	Capitol 1166	7
I Want Gold in My Pockets (When There's Silver in My Hair)	Capitol 1286	7
Alimony	Capitol 1286	7
Don't Make Love to Mary (With Mabel on Your Mind)	Capitol 1345	7
Cheaters Never Prosper	Capitol 1345	7
Tulsa Trot	Capitol 1398	7
She Didn't Even Kiss Me Goodbye	Capitol 1398	7
I Lost My Gal From Memphis	Capitol 1475	7
One Way Ticket	Capitol 1475	6
Goodnight Cincinnati, Good Morning Tennessee	Capitol 1540	5

Table A-50: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Sugar-Coated Love	Capitol 1540	3
Love and Devotion	Capitol 1700	1
Blackstrap Molasses	Capitol 1700	7
I Want to Be Near You	Capitol 1798	1
Crocker Spaniel Polka	Capitol 1798	7
Shrimp Boats	RCA Victor 20-4409	5
Urn on the Mantle, The	RCA Victor 20-4409	7
Shame On You	RCA Victor 20-4506	3
Only Politickin'	RCA Victor 20-4506	7
Sweet Little Boogie	RCA Victor 20-4897	7
Miracle Waltz	RCA Victor 20-4897	1
Bronco Busters' Ball	RCA Victor 20-4708	1
Sinful	RCA Victor 20-4708	7
Changeable	Decca 28660	1
Big, Big Lie, The	Decca 28660	3
Don't Call My Name	Decca 28721	7
Hey, Mr. Cotton Picker	Decca 28721	7
Deck of Cards, The	Decca 28809	9
Seven Days in Heaven	Decca 28809	9
If You'd Believe In Me	Decca 29077	2
Money	Decca 29077	7
Down in the Meadow	Decca 29133	N/A
River of No Return	Decca 29133	2
They Were Doin' the Mambo	Decca 29202	7
That's the Good Lord Sayin' "Good Morning"	Decca 29202	9
This Old House	Decca 29254	9
Two Texas Boys	Decca 29254	5
Side Tracked	Decca 29308	4
Can I Say the Same About You	Decca 29308	2
Air Mail Special	Decca 29385	10
Williams Rag	Decca 29385	10
Roses and Revolvers	Decca 29469	7
Rancho's Boogie	Decca 29469	10

Source: Ken Griffis, "The Tex Williams Story," John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly Vol. 15, No. 53 (Spring 1979): 10-16.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-51: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Bob Wills, 1939-1954

<u>Song</u>	<u>Release Number</u>	<u>Category*</u>
Blue Bonnet Rag	Okeh 05523	10
Medley of Spanish Waltzes	Okeh 05523	10
You Don't Love Me (But I'll Always Care)	Okeh 05597	2
No Wonder	Okeh 05597	1
Lone Star Rag	Okeh 05637	10
I Don't Lov' A Nobody	Okeh 05637	10
Bob Wills Special	Okeh 05694	10
New San Antonio Rose	Okeh 05694	2
That Brownskin Gal	Okeh 05753	10
Time Changes Everything	Okeh 05753	3
There's Going to Be a Party	Okeh 05905	7
Big Beaver	Okeh 05905	10
New Worried Mind	Okeh 06101	2
Take Me Back to Tulsa	Okeh 06101	7
Maiden's Prayer	Okeh 06205	2
Takin' It Home	Okeh 06205	10
Lyla Lou	Okeh 06327	1
Twin Guitar Special	Okeh 06327	10
Bob Wills Stomp	Okeh 06371	10
Lil Liza Jane	Okeh 06371	7
Corrine Corrina	Okeh 06530	3
Goodnight Little Sweetheart	Okeh 06530	1
Cherokee Maiden	Okeh 06568	7
Ride On! (My Prairie Pinto)	Okeh 06568	1
It's All Your Fault	Okeh 06598	2
Dusty Skies	Okeh 06598	5
Oh! You Pretty Woman	Okeh 06640	1
I Knew the Moment I Lost You	Okeh 06640	3
Please Don't Leave Me	Okeh 06681	1
My Life's Been a Pleasure	Okeh 06681	1
Ten Years	Okeh 06692	3
Let's Ride With Bob	Okeh 06692	10
My Confession	Okeh 06703	2
Whose Heart Are You Breaking Now	Okeh 06703	2
Home in San Antoine	Okeh 06710	6
Miss Molly	Okeh 06710	1
We Might As Well Forget It	Okeh 06722	3
You're From Texas	Okeh 06722	6
Hang Your Head in Shame	Okeh 06736	3

Table A-51: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Smoke on the Water	Okeh 06736	8
You Don't Care What Happens	Okeh 06742	3
Stars and Stripes On Iwo Jima	Okeh 06742	8
Silver Dew on the Blue Grass Tonight	Okeh 20002	8
Blue Bonnet Lane	Conqueror 9822	6
Got a Letter From My Kid Today	Conqueror 9823	6
Texas Playboy Rag	Columbia 20002	10
Empty Chair at the Christmas Table	Columbia 20008	8
White Cross on Okinawa	Columbia 20008	8
Roly Poly	Columbia 20019	7
New Spanish Two-Step	Columbia 20019	7
Stay a Little Longer	Columbia 20078	7
I Can't Go On This Way	Columbia 20078	2
There's A Big Rock in the Road	Columbia 20093	6
I'm Gonna Be Boss From Now On	Columbia 20093	3
Cotton-Eyed Joe	Columbia 20094	7
Staccato Waltz	Columbia 20094	1
Big Beaver	Columbia 20111	10
Sugar Moon	Columbia 20113	1
Brain Cloudy Blues	Columbia 20113	4
Rose of Old Pawnee	Columbia 20122	2
Bob Wills Boogie	Columbia 20122	10
Punkin' Stomp	Columbia 20188	10
How Can It Be Wrong	Columbia 20188	1
You Should Have Thought of That Before	Columbia 20359	3
Fat Boy Rag	Columbia 20359	10
Liberty	Columbia 20373	10
Kind of Love I Can't Forget, The	Columbia 20373	2
Sweet Kind of Love, A	Columbia 20391	1
Cowboy Stomp	Columbia 20391	10
This is Southland	Columbia 20412	10
Deep Water	Columbia 20412	3
Texarkana Baby	Columbia 20424	7
New Texas Playboy Rag	Columbia 20424	10
Devil Ain't Lazy, The	Columbia 20458	6
Bob Wills Schottische	Columbia 20458	10
Honeymoon Trail	Columbia 20487	6
Hometown Stomp	Columbia 20487	10
Let Me Call You Sweetheart	Columbia 20513	1

Table A-51: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Can't Enough of Texas	Columbia 20513	6
That Hot Like Fiddlin' Man	Columbia 20531	7
Good Time Cake Walk	Columbia 20531	7
Goodbye, Liza Jane	Columbia 20555	7
I'm Feelin' Bad	Columbia 20555	2
Misery	Columbia 20582	2
You're There	Columbia 20582	1
Bubbles in My Beer	MGM 10116	4
Spanish Fandango	MGM 10116	1
Little Cowboy Lullaby	MGM 10139	5
Closed For Repairs	MGM 10139	2
Keeper of My Heart	MGM 10175	2
I'll Have Somebody Else	MGM 10175	3
I Had a Little Mule	MGM 10213	7
Blues for Dixie	MGM 10213	6
'Neath Hawaiian Palms	MGM 10236	6
Thorn in My Heart	MGM 10236	2
Go Home With the Girls in the Mornin'	MGM 10276	5
Still Water Runs Deepest	MGM 10276	3
Cotton Patch Blues	MGM 10291	5
Hop, Skip and Jump Over Texas	MGM 10291	10
Blackout Blues	MGM 10292	7
Sally Goodin'	MGM 10292	7
I Want to Be Near You	MGM 10334	1
Texas Drummer Boy	MGM 10334	10
Dog House Blues	MGM 10370	7
Playboy Chimes	MGM 10370	10
Silver Lake Blues	MGM 10415	10
Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age	MGM 10415	1
Papa's Jumpin'	MGM 10459	10
I Ain't Got Nobody (And Nobody Cares for Me)	MGM 10459	2
Bob Wills Square Dance, Number One	MGM 10469	10
Bob Wills Square Dance, Number Three	MGM 10469	10
Warm Red Wine, The	MGM 10491	4
Nothing But Trouble	MGM 10491	2
When It's Christmas on the Range	MGM 10512	5
Santa's On His Way	MGM 10512	7
I Married the Rose of San Antone	MGM 10526	1
My Little Rock Candy Baby	MGM 10526	1

Table A-51: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Ida Red Likes to Boogie	MGM 10570	7
King Without a Queen, A	MGM 10570	2
She's Gone	MGM 10620	2
Mean Woman With Green Eyes	MGM 10620	5
Jolie Blond Likes to Boogie	MGM 10681	7
Pastime Blues	MGM 10681	2
Nothin' But the Best for My Baby	MGM 10731	1
Rock-A-Bye Baby Blues	MGM 10731	7
Boot Heel Drag	MGM 10786	10
Faded Love	MGM 10786	2
'Tater Pie	MGM 10836	7
I Didn't Realize	MGM 10836	2
Anything	MGM 10898	3
End of the Line, The	MGM 10898	3
I Betcha My Heart I Love You	MGM 10934	1
I Laugh When I Think How I Cried Over You	MGM 10934	3
Cross My Heart I Love You	MGM 10980	1
I'm Dotting Each "I" With a Teardrop	MGM 10980	2
I'm Tired of Living This Lie	MGM 11024	3
Pliney Jane	MGM 11024	7
Silver Bell	MGM 11082	10
Last Goodbye, The	MGM 11082	8
Brown Skin Gal	MGM 11119	10
Send Me a Red Rose	MGM 11119	1
'Cause I'm In Love	MGM 11130	2
You Always Keep Me In Hot Water	MGM 11130	3
Twinkle Star	MGM 11163	10
I Can't Stand This Loneliness	MGM 11163	2
I'll Be Lucky Someday	MGM 11212	2
Hubbin' It	MGM 11213	5
I Want to Be Wanted	MGM 11241	2
Snathchin' and Grabbin'	MGM 11241	6
Three Miles South of Cash	MGM 11288	7
I'm All Alone	MGM 11288	2
Red Hot Needle, A	MGM 11322	7
Trouble, Trouble Blues	MGM 11322	2
Awake But Dreaming	MGM 11377	1
Steamboat Stomp	MGM 11377	6
Little Girl, Little Girl	MGM 11452	1

Table A-51: (continued)

Song	Release Number	Category*
Sittin' on Top of the World	MGM 11452	3
Broken Heart For a Souvenir, A	MGM 11516	2
I Want to Go to Mexico	MGM 11516	7
I Won't Be Back Tonight	MGM 11568	3
B. Bowman Hop	MGM 11568	10
As I Sit Broken-Hearted	MGM 11635	2
Bottle Baby Boogie	MGM 11635	7
(Everyone is Calling You A) Fallen Angel	MGM 11709	1
She's the Quarter Horse Type (Of a Gal)	MGM 11709	7
I Hit the Jackpot (When I Won You)	MGM 11767	1
Texas Blues	MGM 11767	6
Saint Louis Blues	MGM 11832	7
I've Got a New Road Under My Wheels	MGM 11832	5
Cadillac in Model "A"	MGM 11883	1
Waltzing in Old San Antone	MGM 11883	2
So Long, I'll See You Later	MGM 11985	5
I Live For You	MGM 11985	1
Bob Wills Square Dance, Number Two	MGM 12142	10
Bob Wills Square Dance, Number Four	MGM 12142	10

Source: Bob Pinson, "Discography," San Antonio Rose: The Life and Music of Bob Wills, by Charles R. Townsend (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976) 339-359.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-52: Lyrical Analysis of Recordings by Faron Young, 1952-1954

Song	Release Number	Category*
Hot Rod Shotgun Boogie, No. 2	Gotham 412	7
Hi-Tone Pappa	Gotham 412	7
Have I Waited Too Long	Gotham 415	2
You're Just Imagination	Gotham 415	2
I Heard the Jukebox Playing	Gotham 424	3
I'm a Free Man Now	Gotham 424	3
Have I Waited Too Long	Capitol 2039	2
Tattle Tale Tears	Capitol 2039	3
I Knew You When	Capitol 2133	1
Foolish Pride	Capitol 2133	2
What Can I Do With My Sorrow	Capitol 2171	2
Saving My Tears (For Tomorrow)	Capitol 2171	2
Goin' Steady	Capitol 2299	1
Just Out of Reach (Of My Two Open Arms)	Capitol 2299	2
I Can't Wait (For the Sun to Go Down)	Capitol 2461	1
What's the Use to Love You	Capitol 2461	4
That's What I'd Do for You	Capitol 2570	1
Baby My Heart	Capitol 2570	1
You're the Angel on My Christmas Tree	Capitol 2629	1
I'm Gonna Tell Santa Claus on You	Capitol 2629	7
I Hardly Knew It Was You	Capitol 2690	3
Just Married	Capitol 2690	1
You're Right (But I Wish You Were Wrong)	Capitol 2780	2
They Made Me Fall in Love With You	Capitol 2780	1
A Place for Girls Like You	Capitol 2859	3
In the Chapel in the Moonlight	Capitol 2859	1
If That's the Fashion	Capitol 2953	3
If You Ain't Lovin' (You Ain't Livin')	Capitol 2953	7

Source: Otto Kitsinger, Don Roy and Richard Weize, "The Capitol Discography,"
Faron Young, The Classic Years: 1952-1962, by Colin Escott (Vollersode:
 Bear Family Records, 1992) 40.

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

Table A-53: Lyrical Analysis of Charted Country Music Singles, 1939-1954

Year	Song	Artist	Release Number	Cat*
1939	Are You From Dixie?	Blue Sky Boys	Bluebird 8294	6
1939	Back in the Saddle Again	Autry, Gene	Okeh 05080	5
1939	Black Jack David	Carlisle, Cliff	Decca 5732	5
1939	Budded Roses	Light Crust Doughboys	Okeh 04825	8
1939	Drifting Too Far From Shore	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05297	9
1939	Footprints in the Snow	Carlisle Brothers	Decca 5720	8
1939	Gonna Raise A Ruckus Tonight	Carlisle Brothers	Decca 5774	7
1939	Goodbye Old Paint	Ritter, Tex	Perfect 12093	8
1939	I Wish I Was a Single Girl Again	Lulu Belle & Scotty	Okeh 04772	7
1939	I'm Thinking Tonight of Blue Eyes	Atcher, B. & B. Blue Eyes	Okeh 05134	7
1939	Lamplighting Time in the Valley	Ritter, Tex	Decca 5648	6
1939	Little Rubber Dolly	Texas Wanderers	Okeh 05120	7
1939	Mountain Dew	Lulu Belle & Scotty	Okeh 04690	7
1939	My Grandfather's Clock	Shelton Brothers	Decca 5739	7
1939	Orange Blossom Special	Rouse Brothers	Bluebird 8218	6
1939	Prisoner's Dream	Lulu Belle & Scotty	Okeh 04841	5
1939	Prosperity Special	Wills, Bob	Okeh 05228	10
1939	Rubber Dolly	Texas Wanderers	Decca 5740	10
1939	South of the Border	Autry, Gene	Okeh 05122	6
1939	Sparkling Blue Eyes	Mainer, Wade	Bluebird 8042	1
1939	There's A Love Knot in My Lariat	Montana Slim	Bluebird 8111	5
1939	This Train	Lulu Belle & Scotty	Okeh 04910	9
1939	Truck Driver's Blues	Bruner, Cliff	Decca 5725	5
1939	You Are My Flower	Carter Family	Decca 5692	1
1940	Be Honest With Me	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06229	3
1940	Be Honest With Me	Autry, Gene	Okeh 05980	3
1940	Beneath That Lonely Mound of Clay	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05695	8
1940	Come Back Little Pal	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05956	2
1940	Cool Water	Atcher, Bob	Okeh 05808	5
1940	Corrina, Corrina	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06530	3
1940	Cripple Creek	Light Crust Doughboys	Okeh 05653	7
1940	Cryin' Holy Unto My Lord	Monroe, Bill	Bluebird 8611	9
1940	East Bound Train	Blue Sky Boys	Bluebird 8552	6
1940	First Whippoorwill Song	Kincaid, Bradley	Bluebird 8478	1
1940	Goodbye, Little Darling, Goodbye	Autry, Gene	Okeh 05463	3
1940	Honky Tonk Blues	Dexter, Al	Vocalian 3435	7
1940	Katy Hill	Monroe, Bill	Bluebird 8692	10
1940	Last Letter, The	Atcher, B. & B. Blue Eyes	Okeh 05402	2
1940	Little Brown Jug	Massey Family	Okeh 05425	10
1940	Lone Star Rag	Wills, Bob	Okeh 05637	10
1940	Muleskinner Blues	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05638	5
1940	Muleskinner Blues	Monroe, Bill	Bluebird 8568	5
1940	New San Antonio Rose	Wills, Bob	Okeh 05694	2
1940	Old Mountain Dew	Delmore Brothers	Decca 5890	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1940	Pictures From Life's Other Side	Blue Sky Boys	Bluebird 8646	9
1940	Precious Jewel	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05956	8
1940	Put Your Little Feet Right Down	Massey, Louise	Okeh 05425	10
1940	Rancho Grande, El	Autry, Gene	Okeh 05513	5
1940	Short Life of Trouble	Blue Sky Boys	Bluebird 8829	8
1940	Snow Deer	Light Crust Doughboys	Okeh 05696	10
1940	Streamlined Cannonball	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05638	6
1940	Sweethearts or Strangers	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 5902	3
1940	Time Changes Everything	Wills, Bob	Okeh 05753	3
1940	Too Late	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 5940	4
1940	Too Late	Wakely, Jimmy	Decca 5909	4
1940	Will the Circle Be Unbroken?	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 05587	9
1940	Worried Mind	Daffan, Ted	Okeh 05668	2
1940	You Are My Sunshine	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 5813	2
1941	Beaver Creek	Lewis, Texas Jim	Decca 6001	7
1941	Cimarron	Wakely, Jimmy	Decca 5877	6
1941	Cool Water	Sons of the Pioneers	Decca 5939	5
1941	Fort Worth Jail	Wakely, Jimmy	Decca 6029	5
1941	Froggie Went a-Courtin'	Wakely, Jimmy	Decca 5995	7
1941	I Wonder Why You Said Goodbye	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 5976	2
1941	I'm Sorry Now	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 5926	4
1941	In the Pines	Monroe, Bill	Bluebird 8861	5
1941	It Makes No Difference Now	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06274	2
1941	John Henry	Callahan Brothers	Decca 5998	5
1941	Last Letter, The	Montana Slim	Bluebird 8842	2
1941	Live and Let Live	Walker and Sullivan	Okeh 06374	2
1941	Molly Darling	Lewis, Texas Jim	Decca 6019	1
1941	My Life's Been A Pleasure	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06681	1
1941	My Mary	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 5955	2
1941	Old Ruben	Mainer, J. E.	Bluebird 8990	5
1941	Old Shep	Foley, Red	Decca 5944	6
1941	Over the Waves	Boyd, Bill	Bluebird 8900	10
1941	Please Don't Leave Me	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06681	1
1941	Precious Jewel	Mainer, Wade	Bluebird 8887	8
1941	Precious Memories	Mainer, Wade	Bluebird 8848	6
1941	Shake My Mother's Hand for Me	Mainer, Wade	Bluebird 8848	9
1941	Sweethearts or Strangers	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06567	3
1941	Take Me Back to Tulsa	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06101	7
1941	Tears on My Pillow	Autry, Gene	Conq 9415	2
1941	Time After Time	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6023	3
1941	Too Late	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06549	4
1941	Too Late	Light Crust Doughboys	Okeh 06113	4
1941	Walking the Floor Over You	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 5958	2
1941	When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again	Walker and Sullivan	Okeh 06374	2
1941	Worried Mind	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06229	2

Table A-53: (continued)

1941	You Are My Sunshine	Atcher, B. & B. Blue Eyes	Okeh 05370	2
1941	You Are My Sunshine	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06274	2
1942	Born to Lose	Daffan, Ted	Okeh 06706	4
1942	Columbus Stockade Blues	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 6083	5
1942	Don't Make Me Go to Bed And I'll Be Good	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06704	8
1942	Fireball Mail	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06685	6
1942	Have I Stayed Away Too Long?	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 147	2
1942	Home in San Antone	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06710	6
1942	Honey Song, The (Honey, I'm in Love With You)	Massey, Louise	Okeh 06687	1
1942	I'm Thinking Tonight of Blue Eyes	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06648	2
1942	I'm Thinking Tonight of Blue Eyes	Montana Slim	Bluebird 9032	2
1942	Jingle Jangle Jingle	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06690	5
1942	Letter I Never Did Mail, The	Boyd, Bill	Bluebird 8910	2
1942	Low and Lonely	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06693	2
1942	Miss Molly	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06710	1
1942	My Confession	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06703	2
1942	Night Train to Memphis	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06693	6
1942	No Letter Today	Daffan, Ted	Okeh 06706	2
1942	Pistol Packin' Mama	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06708	7
1942	Prodigal Son, The	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06716	9
1942	Rosalita	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06708	1
1942	So Long Pal	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06718	1
1942	There's A Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere	Britt, Elton	Bluebird 9000	8
1942	They Took the Stars Out of Heaven	Tillman, Floyd	Decca 6090	2
1942	Too Late to Worry, Too Blue to Cry	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06718	3
1942	Tweedle O'Twill	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06680	7
1942	Wreck on the Highway	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06685	9
1944	Each Night At Nine	Tillman, Floyd	Decca 6104	8
1944	G.I. Blues	Tillman, Floyd	Decca 6104	8
1944	I Hang My Head and Cry	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06627	2
1944	I'll Forgive You, But I Can't Forget	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06723	2
1944	I'm Sending You Red Roses	Wakely, Jimmy	Decca 6095	1
1944	I'm Thinking Tonight of Blue Eyes	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06648	2
1944	I'm Wastin' My Tears On You	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 174	3
1944	If It's Wrong to Love You	Mitchell, Charles	Bluebird 33-0508	2
1944	Is It Too Late Now?	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 6100	4
1944	Jealous Heart	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 179	2
1944	Look Who's Talkin'	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Okeh 06719	3
1944	Mexican Joe	Anderson, Ivie	Exclusive 3113	7
1944	New San Antonio Rose	Wills, Bob	Okeh 05694	6
1944	No Letter Today	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Okeh 06706	2
1944	Pistol Packin' Mama	Crosby, Bing	Decca 23277	7
1944	Pistol Packin' Mama	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06708	7
1944	Prodigal Son, The	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06716	9
1944	Rosalita	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06708	1

Table A-53: (continued)

1944	She Broke My Heart In Three Places	Hoosier Hot Shots	Decca 4442	7
1944	Smoke on the Water	Foley, Red	Decca 6102	8
1944	Soldier's Last Letter	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6098	8
1944	Texas Blues	Willing, Foy	Capitol 162	6
1944	There's a Blue Star Shining Bright	Foley, Red	Decca 6102	8
1944	There's a Chill on the Hill Tonight	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 6100	2
1944	There's A New Moon Over My Shoulder	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 174	2
1944	They Took the Stars Out of Heaven	Tillman, Floyd	Decca 6090	2
1944	Too Late to Worry, Too Blue to Cry	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06718	3
1944	Too Late to Worry, Too Blue to Cry	Lewis, Texas Jim	Decca 6099	3
1944	Try Me One More Time	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6093	2
1944	We Might As Well Forget It	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06722	3
1944	When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again	Walker, Cindy	Decca 6103	2
1944	Write Me Sweetheart	Acuff, Roy	Okeh 06723	3
1944	Yesterday's Tears	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6098	2
1944	You're From Texas	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06722	6
1945	At Mail Call Today	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06737	8
1945	At Mail Call Today	Foley, Red w/L. Welk	Decca 18698	8
1945	Careless Darlin'	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6110	3
1945	Christmas Carols By the Old Coral	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 223	7
1945	Don't Fence Me In	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06728	5
1945	Don't Hang Around Me Anymore	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36840	2
1945	Don't Live A Lie	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36880	3
1945	Each Minute Seems A Million Years	Arnold, Eddy	Bluebird 33-0527	2
1945	Gonna Build a Big Fence Around Texas	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06728	7
1945	Hang Your Head In Shame	Foley, Red	Decca 6108	3
1945	Hang Your Head In Shame	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06736	3
1945	Headin' Down the Wrong Highway	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Okeh 06744	4
1945	Hitler's Last Letter to Hirohito	Robison, Carson	RCA 20-1665	8
1945	Honestly	Thomas, Dick	National 5008	1
1945	I Want to Be Sure	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36880	3
1945	I'll Be Back	Autry, Gene	Okeh 06737	8
1945	I'll Never Let You Worry My Mind	Foley, Red	Decca 6108	3
1945	I'll Wait for You, Dear	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06727	2
1945	I'm a Brandin' My Darlin' With My Heart	Guthrie, Jack	Capitol 201	1
1945	I'm A Convict With Old Glory in My Heart	Britt, Elton	Bluebird 33-0517	8
1945	I'm Losing My Mind Over You	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06727	7
1945	I'm Lost Without You	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06740	2
1945	I've Taken All I'm Gonna Take From You	Cooley, Spade	Okeh 06746	3
1945	It's Been So Long, Darling	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6112	1
1945	Keep My Memory in Your Heart	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6106	1
1945	Oklahoma Hills	Guthrie, Jack	Capitol 201	6
1945	Pair of Broken Hearts, A	Cooley, Spade	Okeh 06731	2
1945	Shadow of My Heart	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Okeh 06744	2
1945	Shame On You	Boyd, Bill	Bluebird 33-0530	3

Table A-53: (continued)

1945	Shame on You	Cooley, Spade	Okeh 06731	3
1945	Shame on You	Foley, Red w/L. Welk	Decca 18698	3
1945	Silver Dew on the Blue Grass Tonight	Wills, Bob	Columbia 36841	8
1945	Sioux City Sue	Thomas, Dick	National 5007	7
1945	Smoke on the Water	Heath, Boyd	Bluebird 33-0522	8
1945	Smoke On the Water	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06736	8
1945	Stars and Stripes On Iwo Jima	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-1724	8
1945	Stars and Stripes On Iwo Jima	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06742	8
1945	Tender-Hearted Sue	Rambling Rouge	Okeh 06747	7
1945	Texas Playboy Rag	Wills, Bob	Columbia 36841	10
1945	There's a New Moon Over My Shoulder	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 6105	2
1945	Time Won't Heal My Broken Heart	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Okeh 06729	2
1945	Tomorrow Never Comes	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 6106	2
1945	Triflin' Gal	Dexter, Al	Okeh 06740	3
1945	Triflin' Gal	Shrum, Walt	Coast 2010	3
1945	White Cross on Okinawa	Wills, Bob	Columbia 36881	8
1945	With Tears In My Eyes	Tuttle, Wesley	Capitol 216	2
1945	You Don't Care What Happens to Me	Wills, Bob	Okeh 06742	3
1945	You Two-Timed Me One Time Too Often	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 206	3
1945	You Will Have to Pay	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 223	3
1945	You're Breaking My Heart	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Okeh 06729	2
1946	All Alone in this World Without You	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-1855	2
1946	Atomic Power	Buchanan Brothers	RCA 20-1850	8
1946	Blue Texas Moonlight	Britt, Elton	RCA 20-1873	6
1946	Blueberry Lane	Britt, Elton	RCA 20-1789	6
1946	California Polka	Williams, Tex	Capitol 302	10
1946	Chained to a Memory	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-1948	2
1946	Cincinnati Lou	Travis, Merle	Capitol 258	7
1946	Detour	Britt, Elton	RCA 20-1817	7
1946	Detour	Cooley, Spade	Columbia 36935	7
1946	Detour	Tuttle, Wesley	Capitol 233	7
1946	Detour	Willing, Foy	Decca 9000	7
1946	Divorce Me C.O.D.	King Sisters	RCA 20-2018	3
1946	Divorce Me C.O.D.	Travis, Merle	Capitol 290	3
1946	Drivin' Nails in My Coffin	Tillman, Floyd	Columbia 36998	4
1946	Drivin' Nails in My Coffin	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46019	4
1946	Filipino Baby	Copas, Cowboy	King 505	7
1946	Filipino Baby	Robertson, Texas Jim	RCA 20-1975	7
1946	Filipino Baby	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46019	7
1946	Filipino Baby	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1008	7
1946	Footprints in the Snow	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 37151	8
1946	Freight Train Boogie	Delmore Bros.	King 570	7
1946	Get Yourself a Redhead	Penny, Hank	King 540	7
1946	Gotta Get Together With My Gal	Britt, Elton	RCA 20-1927	1
1946	Grievin' My Heart Out For You	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 18756	2

Table A-53: (continued)

1946	Guitar Polka	Allen, Rosalie	RCA 20-1924	7
1946	Guitar Polka	Dexter, Al	Columbia 36898	10
1946	Harriet	Foley, Red	Decca 9003	7
1946	Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?	Autry, Gene	Columbia 37079	1
1946	Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 296	1
1946	Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?	Foley, Red	Decca 46014	1
1946	Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?	Willing, Foy	Majestic 6000	1
1946	Honey Do You Think It's Wrong	Dexter, Al	Columbia 36898	7
1946	I Can't Go On This Way	Wills, Bob	Columbia 37097	2
1946	I Must Have Been Wrong	Atcher, Bob	Columbia 36983	2
1946	I Want to be a Cowboy's Sweetheart	Allen, Rosalie	RCA 20-1924	5
1946	I Wish I Had Never Met Sunshine	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36970	3
1946	I Wish I Had Never Met Sunshine	Tuttle, Wesley	Capitol 233	3
1946	Inflation	Manners, Zeke	RCA 20-2013	7
1946	It's Up to You	Dexter, Al	Columbia 37062	3
1946	Kentucky Waltz	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 36907	2
1946	Little White Cross on the Hill, A	Rogers, Roy	RCA 20-1872	8
1946	Long Time Gone	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 253	2
1946	Make Room in Your Heart for a Friend	Wiley and Gene	Columbia 36869	2
1946	New Spanish Two-Step	Wills, Bob	Columbia 36966	7
1946	New Steel Guitar Rag	Boyd, Bill	RCA 20-1907	10
1946	No One to Cry To	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-1868	2
1946	No Vacancy	Travis, Merle	Capitol 258	8
1946	Rainbow At Midnight	Carlisle, Bill	King 535	8
1946	Rainbow At Midnight	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46018	8
1946	Roly-Poly	Wills, Bob	Columbia 36966	7
1946	Shut That Gate	Daffan's Texans, Ted	Columbia 37087	7
1946	Silver Spurs (On the Golden Stairs)	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36904	6
1946	Sioux City Sue	Hill, Tiny	Mercury 2024	7
1946	Sioux City Sue	Hoosier Hot Shots	Decca 18745	7
1946	Sioux City Sue	Manners, Zeke	RCA 21-2013	7
1946	Someday	Autry, Gene	Columbia 37079	3
1946	Someday (You'll Want Me to Want You)	Hoosier Hot Shots	Decca 18738	3
1946	Someday (You'll Want Me to Want You)	Britt, Elton	Bluebird 33-0521	3
1946	Stay A Little Longer	Wills, Bob	Columbia 37097	7
1946	Steel Guitar Stomp	Penny, Hank	King 528	10
1946	That's How Much I Love You	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-1948	1
1946	Tho' I Tried (I Can't Forget You)	Tuttle, Wesley	Capitol 267	2
1946	Wave to Me, My Lady	Britt, Elton	RCA 20-1789	5
1946	Wave to Me, My Lady	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36984	5
1946	When You Leave Don't Slam the Door	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 296	3
1946	Wine, Women and Song	Dexter, Al	Columbia 37062	7
1946	You Can't Break A Heart	Cooley, Spade	Columbia 36935	3
1946	You Only Want Me When You're Lonely	Autry, Gene	Columbia 36970	2
1947	(Oh Why, Oh Why, Did I Ever Leave) Wyoming	Jurgens, Dick	Columbia 37210	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1947	Baby Doll	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-2086	1
1947	Bang, Bang	Davis, Jimmie	Decca 46016	7
1947	Bob Wills Boogie	Wills, Bob	Columbia 37357	10
1947	Cigareetes, Whusky, and Wild Wild Women	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-2199	7
1947	Cool Water	Sons of the Pioneers	Decca 46027	5
1947	Crazy 'Cause I Love You	Cooley, Spade	Columbia 37058	3
1947	Daughter of Jole Blon, The	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 37566	7
1947	Divorce Me C.O.D.	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 37217	3
1947	Don't Look Now (But Your Broken Heart is Showing)	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46040	3
1947	Down at the Roadside Inn	Dexter, Al	Columbia 37303	7
1947	Fat Gal	Travis, Merle	Capitol 40026	7
1947	Feudin' and Fightin'	Shay, Dorothy	Columbia 37189	7
1947	Feudin' and Fightin'	Stafford, Jo	Capitol 443	7
1947	Freight Train Boogie	Foley, Red	Decca 46035	7
1947	I Couldn't Believe It Was True	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2241	2
1947	I'll Hold You In My Heart (Till I Can Hold You In My Arms)	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2332	1
1947	I'll Step Aside	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46041	2
1947	I'm Gonna Be Boss From Now On	Wills, Bob	Columbia 37205	3
1947	It's A Sin	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2241	2
1947	Jole Blon	Acuff, Roy	Columbia 37287	1
1947	Jole Blon	Choates, Harry	Modern 511	1
1947	Jole Blon's Sister	Mullican, Moon	King 632	7
1947	Kokomo Island	Dexter, Al	Columbia 37200	7
1947	Missouri	Travis, Merle	Capitol 290	6
1947	Move It On Over	Williams, Hank	MGM 10033	7
1947	My Chickashay Gal	Rogers, Roy	RCA 20-2124	7
1947	Never Trust a Woman	Foley, Red	Decca 46074	7
1947	Never Trust a Woman	Williams, Tex	Capitol 40054	7
1947	New Jole Blon	Foley, Red	Decca 46034	7
1947	New Pretty Blonde (Jole Blon)	Mullican, Moon	King 578	7
1947	Oakie Boogie	Guthrie, Jack	Capitol 341	7
1947	Rainbow At Midnight	Robertson, Texas Jim	RCA 20-1975	8
1947	Silver Stars, Purple Sage, Eyes of Blue	Stone, Cliffie	Capitol 354	1
1947	Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)	Williams, Tex	Capitol 40001	7
1947	So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 37255	7
1947	So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed	Travis, Merle	Capitol 349	7
1947	So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46040	7
1947	Steel Guitar Rag	Travis, Merle	Capitol 384	7
1947	Sugar Moon	Wills, Bob	Columbia 37313	1
1947	Tear Drops in My Heart	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-2276	2
1947	Tempation (Tim-Tayshun)	Ingle, Red	Capitol 412	7
1947	That's How Much I Love You	Foley, Red	Decca 46028	1
1947	That's What I Like About the West	Williams, Tex	Capitol 40031	6
1947	Three Times Seven	Travis, Merle	Capitol 384	5
1947	To My Sorrow	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2481	2

Table A-53: (continued)

1947	What Is Life Without Love?	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2058	2
1947	You're Not My Darling Anymore	Autry, Gene	Columbia 37201	3
1948	Anytime	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2700	1
1948	Anytime	Willing, Foy	Capitol 40108	1
1948	Banjo Boogie	Smith, Arthur	MGM 10229	10
1948	Banjo Polka	Williams, Tex	Capitol 15101	10
1948	Beaut From Butte	Thomas, Dick	Decca 46132	7
1948	Blue Shadows on the Trail	Rogers, Roy	RCA 20-2780	5
1948	Bouquet of Roses	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2806	2
1948	Breeze	Copas, Cowboy	King 618	2
1948	Bubbles in My Beer	Wills, Bob	MGM 10116	4
1948	Buttons and Bows	Autry, Gene	Columbia 20377	7
1948	Calico Rag	Dexter, Al	Columbia 20438	7
1948	Carolina Waltz	Moody, Clyde	King 706	2
1948	Chime Bells	Britt, Elton	RCA 20-3090	1
1948	Cocaine Blues	Hogsed, Roy	Capitol 40120	5
1948	Crazy Boogie	Travis, Merle	Capitol 15143	7
1948	Crying in My Beer	Irby, Jerry	MGM 10151	7
1948	Dad Gave My Dog Away	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1248	6
1948	Dear Oakie	O'dell, Doye	Exclusive 33	7
1948	Dear Oakie	Rivers, Jack	Capitol 15169	7
1948	Deck of Cards	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 40114	8
1948	Deck of Cards	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1228	8
1948	Dog House Boogie	Hawkins, Hawkshaw	King 720	7
1948	Don't Telephone, Don't Telegraph, Tell A Woman	Williams, Tex	Capitol 40081	7
1948	Foggy River	Smith, Kate	MGM 30059	2
1948	Foolish Tears	Williams, Tex	Capitol 15113	4
1948	Forever Is Ending Today	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46134	2
1948	Gods Were Angry With Me, The	Kirk, Eddie	Capitol 15176	2
1948	Great Long Pistol	Irby, Jerry	MGM 10188	7
1948	Green Light	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 15187	3
1948	Guitar Boogie	Smith, Arthur	MGM 10293	10
1948	Have You Ever Been Lonely? (Have You Ever Been Blue?)	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46144	2
1948	Heart Full of Love (For A Handful of Kisses), A	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-3174	2
1948	Here Comes Santa Claus	Autry, Gene	Columbia 20377	7
1948	Honky Tonk Gal	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1249	7
1948	Honky Tonkin'	Williams, Hank	MGM 10171	1
1948	Humpty Dumpty Heart	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 40065	7
1948	I Love You So Much, It Hurts	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 15243	1
1948	I Love You So Much, It Hurts	Tillman, Floyd	Columbia 20430	1
1948	I'm A Long Gone Daddy	Williams, Hank	MGM 10212	3
1948	I'm My own Grandpa	Lonzo & Oscar	RCA 20-2563	7
1948	Jack and Jill Boogie	Raney, Wayne	King 732	7
1948	Just A Little Lovin' (Will Go a Long, Long Way)	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-3013	1
1948	Just a Pair of Blue Eyes	Williams, Tex	Capitol 15175	1

Table A-53: (continued)

1948	Keeper of My Heart	Wills, Bob	MGM 10175	2
1948	Lazy Mazy	Hobbs, Bud	MGM 10206	7
1948	Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46144	3
1948	Life Gits Tee-Jus, Don't It?	Robison, Carson	MGM 10224	7
1948	Life Gits Tee-Jus, Don't It?	Williams, Tex	Capitol 15271	7
1948	Little Community Church	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 20488	9
1948	Lost John Boogie	Raney, Wayne	King 719	7
1948	Memories of France	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1249	6
1948	Merle's Boogie Woogie	Travis, Merle	Capitol 40026	7
1948	Mine All Mine	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 15236	1
1948	Molly Darling	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2489	1
1948	My Daddy Is Only A Picture	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-3013	6
1948	My Heart Echoes	Osborne, Jimmie	King 715	2
1948	Never Trust a Woman	Hill, Tiny	Mercury 6062	7
1948	Oklahoma Waltz	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 38160	2
1948	One Has My Name, The Other Has My Heart	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 15162	4
1948	One Has My Name, The Other Has My Heart	Dean, Eddie	Crystal 132	4
1948	Pan American	Hawkins, Hawkshaw	King 689	6
1948	Pecos Bill	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 40106	7
1948	Pecos Bill	Rogers, Roy	RCA 20-2780	7
1948	Peepin' Through the Keyhole	Stone, Cliffie	Capitol 40083	7
1948	Red Roses Tied In Blue	Moody, Clyde	King 706	2
1948	Rock and Rye	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 15119	7
1948	Rock and Rye Rag	Dexter, Al	Columbia 20422	10
1948	Rye Whiskey	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 40084	4
1948	Seaman's Blues	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46119	8
1948	Signed, Sealed and Delivered	Copas, Cowboy	King 658	2
1948	Signed, Sealed and Delivered	Atcher, Bob	Columbia 37991	2
1948	Signed, Sealed and Delivered	Robertson, Texas Jim	RCA 20-2651	2
1948	Signed, Sealed and Delivered	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 40088	2
1948	Sinner's Death, A	Acuff, Roy	Columbia 20475	9
1948	Slap 'Er Down Again, Paw	Esmereldy	Musicraft 524	7
1948	Suspicion	Williams, Tex	Capitol 40109	7
1948	Sweeter Than the Flowers	Long, Shorty	Decca 46139	8
1948	Sweeter Than the Flowers	Mullican, Moon	King 673	8
1948	Sweetheart, You Done Me Wrong	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 38172	2
1948	Talking Boogie	Williams, Tex	Capitol 15175	7
1948	Tennesse Waltz, The	Acuff, Roy	Columbia 20551	2
1948	Tennessee Moon	Copas, Cowboy	King 714	2
1948	Tennessee Saturday Night	Foley, Red	Decca 46136	7
1948	Tennessee Waltz	Copas, Cowboy	King 696	2
1948	Tennessee Waltz	King, Pee Wee	RCA 20-2680	2
1948	Texarkana Baby	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2806	7
1948	Texarkana Baby	Wills, Bob	Columbia 38179	7
1948	That Wild and Wicked Look in Your Eye	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46134	3

Table A-53: (continued)

1948	Then I Turned and Walked Slowly Away	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-3174	2
1948	This World Can't Stand Long	Acuff, Roy	Columbia 20454	9
1948	Thorn in My Heart	Wills, Bob	MGM 10236	2
1948	Tramp on the Street	Carlisle, Bill	King 697	9
1948	Tumbling Tumbleweeds	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-1904	5
1948	Unloved and Unclaimed	Acuff, Roy	Columbia 20454	8
1948	Waltz of the Wind	Acuff, Roy	Columbia 38042	1
1948	What a Fool I Was	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-2700	2
1948	When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again	Stone, Cliffie	Capitol 15108	2
1948	Who? Me?	Williams, Tex	Capitol 15113	7
1948	Wicked Path of Sin	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 20503	9
1948	Yesterday's Mail	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 15132	2
1948	You Nearly Lose Your Mind	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46125	7
1949	Afraid	Allen, Rex	Mercury 6192	3
1949	All I Need Is Some More Lovin'	Morgan, George	Columbia 20563	2
1949	Anticipation Blues	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 40258	7
1949	Baby, It's Cold Outside	Homer & Jethro & J. Carter	RCA 21-0075	7
1949	Before You Call	Landers, Dave	MGM 10427	7
1949	Blue Christmas	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46186	2
1949	Bluebird on Your Windowsill	Williams, Tex	Capitol 40225	6
1949	Blues in My Heart	Foley, Red	Decca 46136	2
1949	Blues Stay Away From Me	Bradley, Owen	Coral 60107	2
1949	Blues Stay Away From Me	Delmore Brothers	King 803	2
1949	Blues Stay Away From Me	Crosby, Eddie	Decca 46180	2
1949	Boomerang	Smith, Arthur	MGM 10293	10
1949	Brush Those Tears From Your Eyes	Willing, Foy	Capitol 15290	2
1949	But I'll Go Chasin' Women	Hamblen, Stuart	Columbia 20625	7
1949	Candy Kisses	Britt, Elton	RCA 21-0006	2
1949	Candy Kisses	Copas, Cowboy	King 777	2
1949	Candy Kisses	Foley, Red	Decca 46151	2
1949	Candy Kisses	Hobbs, Bud	MGM 10366	2
1949	Candy Kisses	Kirk, Eddie	Capitol 15391	2
1949	Candy Kisses	Morgan, George	Columbia 20547	2
1949	C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0127	9
1949	Come Wet Your Mustache With Me	Captain Stubby	Decca 46149	7
1949	Country Boy	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 20585	6
1949	Country Junction	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 15430	7
1949	Cry-Baby Heart	Morgan, George	Columbia 20627	2
1949	Daddy, When Is Mommy Coming Home?	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46150	6
1949	Death of Little Kathy Fiscus, The	Osborne, Jimmie	King 788	8
1949	Don't Rob Another Man's Castle	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0042	6
1949	Don't Rob Another Man's Castle	Tubb, E. & Andrew Sisters	Decca 24592	6
1949	Double Talking Woman	Nunn, Earl & Billy Lee	Specialty 701	3
1949	Echo of Your Footsteps, The	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0083	2
1949	Forever More	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 15333	2

Table A-53: (continued)

1949	Gamblin' Polka Dot Blues	Duncan, Tommy	Capitol 40178	7
1949	Give Me a Hundred Reasons	Jones, Ann	Capitol 15414	1
1949	Grass Looks Greener Over Yonder, The	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 40211	3
1949	Hadacol Boogie	Nettles, Bill	Mercury 6190	7
1949	Hangman's Boogie	Copas, Cowboy	King 811	7
1949	I Feel That Old Age Comin' On	Homer and Jethro	King 749	7
1949	I Find You Cheatin' On Me	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 15345	3
1949	I Gotta Have My Baby Back	Tillman, Floyd	Columbia 20641	4
1949	I Heard About You	Hobbs, Bud	MGM 10305	7
1949	I Love Everything About You	Morgan, George	Columbia 20627	1
1949	I Love You Because	Payne, Leon	Capitol 40238	1
1949	I Never See Maggie Alone	Roberts, Kenny	Coral 64012	7
1949	I Still Write Your Name	Starcher, Buddy	Four Star 1145	1
1949	I Wasted a Nickel	Hawkins, Hawkshaw	King 821	3
1949	I Wish I Had A Nickel	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 40153	3
1949	I Wish I Knew	Hewitt, Dolph	RCA 21-0107	2
1949	I'll Never Slip Around Again	Tillman, Floyd	Columbia 20613	4
1949	I'll Never Slip Around Again	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 40246	4
1949	I'm Biting My Fingernails & Thinking of You	Tubb, E. & Andrew Sisters	Decca 24592	7
1949	I'm Throwing Rice (At the Girl I Love)	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0080	2
1949	I'm Throwing Rice (At the Girl I Love)	Foley, Red	Decca 46170	2
1949	I'm Waltzing With Tears In My Eyes	Copas, Cowboy	King 775	2
1949	Jealous Heart	Morgan, Al	London 500	2
1949	Jealous Heart	Roberts, Kenny	Coral 64021	2
1949	Lavender Blue (Dilly Dilly)	Ives, Burl	Decca 24547	7
1949	Little Bird Told Me, A	Rogers, Smokey	Capitol 15326	1
1949	Lost Highway	Williams, Hank	MGM 10506	5
1949	Lovesick Blues	Kirk, Red	Mercury 6189	2
1949	Lovesick Blues	Williams, Hank	MGM 10352	2
1949	Mansion On a Hill	Williams, Hank	MGM 10328	3
1949	Many Tears Ago	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-1871	2
1949	Marriage Vow	Snow, Hank	RCA 21-0056	1
1949	Mean Mama Blues	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46162	7
1949	Mind Your Own Business	Williams, Hank	MGM 10461	8
1949	Money, Marbles, and Chalk	Captain Stubby	Decca 46149	7
1949	Money, Marbles, and Chalk	Page, Patti	Mercury 5251	7
1949	Mule Train	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 40258	7
1949	My Best to You	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 20-2199	6
1949	My Bucket's Got a Hole In It	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1383	7
1949	My Bucket's Got a Hole In It	Williams, Hank	MGM 10560	7
1949	My Filipino Rose	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46175	2
1949	My Heart's Bouquet	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 20598	1
1949	My Tennessee Baby	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46173	7
1949	Never Again	Williams, Hank	MGM 10352	3
1949	One Has My Name, The Other Has My Heart	Eberly, Bob	Decca 24492	4

Table A-53: (continued)

1949	One Kiss Too Many	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0051	3
1949	Pan Handle Rag	McAuliffe, Leon	Columbia 20546	10
1949	Pennies For Papa	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 20548	6
1949	Please Don't Let Me Love You	Morgan, George	Columbia 20547	2
1949	Please Don't Pass Me By	Tillman, Floyd	Columbia 20496	2
1949	Rainbow in My Heart	Morgan, George	Columbia 20563	2
1949	Riders in the Sky	Ives, Burl	Columbia 38445	5
1949	Riders in the Sky	Monroe, Vaughn	RCA 20-2902	5
1949	Room Full Of Roses	Morgan, George	Columbia 20594	2
1949	Room Full of Roses	Sons of the Pioneers	RCA 21-0065	2
1949	Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer	Autry, Gene	Columbia 38610	7
1949	Same Sweet Girl, The	Locklin, Hank	Four Star 1313	1
1949	Show Me the Way Back to Your Heart	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0083	2
1949	Sister Of Sioux City Sue	Thomas, Dick	Decca 46147	7
1949	Sittin' On the Doorstep	Carter, Woody	Macy's 100	7
1949	Slippin' Around	Tillman, Floyd	Columbia 20581	4
1949	Slippin' Around	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46173	4
1949	Slipping Around	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 40224	4
1949	Smokey Mountain Boogie	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 40212	7
1949	Soft Lips	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 40211	1
1949	Someday You'll Call My Name	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 40153	3
1949	Steel Guitar Ramble	Campbell, Cecil	RCA 21-0014	10
1949	Sunday Down in Tennessee	Foley, Red	Decca 46197	6
1949	Take An Old 'Tater (And Wait)	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 20548	7
1949	Take Me In Your Arms and Hold Me	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0146	2
1949	Tellin' My Troubles to My Old Guitar	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 40187	2
1949	Tennessee Boogie	Turner, Zeb	King 790	7
1949	Tennessee Border	Atcher, Bob	Columbia 20557	1
1949	Tennessee Border	Foley, Red	Decca 46151	1
1949	Tennessee Border	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 15400	1
1949	Tennessee Border	Skinner, Jimmie	Radio Artist 244	1
1949	Tennessee Border, No. 2	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 46200	7
1949	Tennessee Border, No. 2	Homer and Jethro	King 0113	7
1949	Tennessee Polka	Foley, Red	Decca 46170	1
1949	Tennessee Polka	King, Pee Wee	RCA 21-0085	1
1949	Tennessee Saturday Night	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 20545	7
1949	Tennessee Tears	King, Pee Wee	RCA 21-0037	2
1949	There's No Wings on My Angel	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0134	1
1949	There's Not A Thing (I Wouldn't Do For You)	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0002	1
1949	Till the End of the World	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 20549	1
1949	Till the End of the World	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46150	1
1949	Till the End of the World	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 15368	1
1949	Toy Heart	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 20552	3
1949	Two Cents, Three Eggs, and a Postcard	Foley, Red	Decca 46165	7
1949	Warm Red Wine	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46175	4

Table A-53: (continued)

1949	Wedding Bells	Roberts, Kenny	Coral 64012	2
1949	Wedding Bells	Rogers, Jesse	RCA 21-0002	2
1949	Wedding Bells	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 40224	2
1949	Wedding Bells	Williams, Hank	MGM 10401	2
1949	What a Shame	Travis, Merle	Capitol 15317	3
1949	What Are We Gonna Do About the Moonlight	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 15132	7
1949	When You Are Lonely	Monroe, Bill	Columbia 20526	3
1949	White Christmas	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46186	6
1949	Whoa Sailor	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 40218	7
1949	Why Don't You Haul Off and Love Me	Atcher, Bob	Columbia 20611	7
1949	Why Don't You Haul Off and Love Me	Raney, Wayne	King 791	7
1949	Why Don't You Haul Off and Love Me	Shiner, Murv	Decca 46178	7
1949	Will Santa Come to Shanty Town	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0124	6
1949	You Broke My Heart	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 15345	2
1949	You're Gonna Change (Or I'm Gonna Leave)	Williams, Hank	MGM 10506	3
1950	(Remember Me) I'm the One Who Loves You	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46269	1
1950	(Remember Me) I'm the One That Loves You	Hamblen, Stuart	Columbia 20714	1
1950	Ain't Nobody's Business But My Own	Ford, Ernie & Kay Starr	Capitol 1124	7
1950	A-Sleeping At the Foot of the Bed	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 20644	7
1950	Beyond the Sunset	Three Sons	RCA 20-3105	1
1950	Birmingham Bounce	Foley, Red	Decca 46234	7
1950	Bloodshot Eyes	Penny, Hank	King 828	3
1950	Bonaparte's Retreat	King, Pee Wee	RCA 21-0114	1
1950	Broken Down Merry-Go-Round	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 800	2
1950	Bushel and A Peck, A	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 1234	1
1950	Careless Kisses	Foley, Red	Decca 46201	3
1950	Chattannogie Shoe Shine Boy	Foley, Red	Decca 46205	7
1950	Choc'late Ice Cream Cone	Foley, Red	Decca 46234	7
1950	Choc'late Ice Cream Cone	Roberts, Kenny	Coral 64032	7
1950	Cincinnati Dancing Pig	Foley, Red	Decca 46261	7
1950	Cry Of the Duck in a Thunderstorm	Pryor, Cactus	Four Star 1459	7
1950	Cry of the Wild Goose, The	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 40280	5
1950	Cuddle Buggin' Baby	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0342	1
1950	Daddy's Last Letter (Private First Class John M. McCormick)	Ritter, Tex	Capitol 1267	8
1950	Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 46200	7
1950	Enclosed, One Broken Heart	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0342	2
1950	Faded Love	Wills, Bob	MGM 10786	2
1950	Frosty, the Snowman	Autry, Gene	Columbia 38907	7
1950	Give Me A Little Old Fashioned Love	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46243	6
1950	God, Please Protect America	Osborne, Jimmie	King 893	8
1950	Gods Were Angry With Me, The	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 800	2
1950	Golden Rocket, The	Snow, Hank	RCA 21-0400	3
1950	Goodnight, Irene	Mullican, Moon	King 886	1
1950	Goodnight, Irene	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 46255	7
1950	Hillbilly Fever	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 20677	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1950	Hillbilly Fever, No. 2	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 46255	7
1950	Hot Rod Race	Shibley, Arkie	Gilt Edge 5021	7
1950	I Gotta Have My Baby Back	Foley, Red	Decca 46201	4
1950	I Just Don't Like This Kind Of Livin'	Williams, Hank	MGM 10609	3
1950	I Love You a Thousand Ways	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20739	1
1950	I Love You Because	Moody, Clyde	King 837	1
1950	I Love You Because	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46213	1
1950	I'll Never Be Free	Ford, Ernie & Kay Starr	Capitol 1124	2
1950	I'll Sail My Ship Alone	Mullican, Moon	King 830	2
1950	I'll Take a Back Seat to You	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46207	1
1950	I'm Moving On	Snow, Hank	RCA 21-0328	5
1950	Ida Red Likes the Boogie	Wills, Bob	MGM 10570	7
1950	If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20739	1
1950	Just a Closer Walk With Thee	Foley, Red	Decca 14505	9
1950	Let's Go to Church (Next Sunday Morning)	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 960	1
1950	Letters Have No Arms	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46207	1
1950	Little Angel With the Dirty Face	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0300	6
1950	Long Gone Lonesome Blues	Williams, Hank	MGM 10645	2
1950	Lose Your Blues	Kirk, Red	Mercury 6257	1
1950	Love Song in 32 Bars	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 20671	7
1950	Lovebug Itch	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0382	7
1950	Mama and Daddy Broke My Heart	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0146	6
1950	M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I	Foley, Red	Decca 46241	7
1950	Moanin' the Blues	Williams, Hank	MGM 10832	2
1950	Mockin' Bird Hill	Pinetoppers	Coral 64061	6
1950	Mona Lisa	Mullican, Moon	King 886	7
1950	Mona Lisa	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 1151	7
1950	My Son Calls Another Man Daddy	Williams, Hank	MGM 10645	5
1950	Nobody's Lonesome For Me	Williams, Hank	MGM 10832	7
1950	Our Lady of Fatima	Foley, Red	Decca 14526	9
1950	Pan American Boogie	Delmore Brothers	King 826	6
1950	Peter Cottontail	Autry, Gene	Columbia 38750	7
1950	Peter Cottontail	Shiner, Murv	Decca 46221	7
1950	Peter Cottontail	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 929	7
1950	Peter Cottontail	Wills, Johnnie Lee	Bullet 700	7
1950	Prison Without Walls	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0382	2
1950	Quicksilver	Britt, Elton and R. Allen	RCA 21-0168	2
1950	Rag Mop	Wills, Johnnie Lee	Bullet 696	7
1950	Shot Gun Boogie	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 1295	7
1950	Slipin' Around With Jole Blon	Franklin & Messner,	Abbey 15004	7
1950	Slippin' Around	Robertson, Texas Jim	RCA 21-0071	4
1950	Stampede	Rogers, Roy	RCA 21-0161	5
1950	Steal Away	Foley, Red	Decca 14505	9
1950	Sugarfoot Rag	Foley, Red	Decca 46205	10
1950	They'll Never Take Her Love Away From Me	Williams, Hank	MGM 10760	4

Table A-53: (continued)

1950	Throw Your Love My Way	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46243	7
1950	Unfaithful One	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46213	3
1950	Why Don't You Love Me	Williams, Hank	MGM 10696	3
1950	Why Should I Cry?	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0300	3
1950	Why Should We Try Anymore	Williams, Hank	MGM 10760	3
1950	You Don't Have to Be a Baby to Cry	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46257	2
1951	(I Heard That) Lonesome Whistle	Williams, Hank	MGM 11054	5
1951	(There'll Be) Peace in the Valley (For Me)	Foley, Red	Decca 46319	9
1951	Alabama Jubilee	Foley, Red	Decca 27810	7
1951	Always Late (With Your Kisses)	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20837	3
1951	Baby, We're Really In Love	Williams, Hank	MGM 11100	1
1951	Beautiful Brown Eyes	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 1393	3
1951	Bluebird Island	Snow, Hank w/A. Carter	RCA 21-0441	1
1951	Cherokee Boogie (Eh-Oh-Aleena)	Mullican, Moon	King 965	7
1951	Chew Tobacco Rag	Turner, Zeb	King 950	7
1951	Cold, Cold Heart	Williams, Hank	MGM 10904	3
1951	Crazy Heart	Williams, Hank	MGM 11054	2
1951	Crying Heart Blues	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 21-0478	2
1951	Dear John	Williams, Hank	MGM 10904	7
1951	Don't Stay Too Long	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46296	1
1951	Down the Trail Of Broken Hearts	Snow, Hank w/A. Carter	RCA 21-0441	2
1951	Down Yonder	Wood, Del	Tennessee 775	6
1951	Driftwood on the River	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46377	4
1951	Give me More, More, More (Of Your Kisses)	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20885	7
1951	Heart Strings	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4273	2
1951	Hey Good Lookin'	Williams, Hank	MGM 11000	1
1951	Hey La La	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46338	8
1951	Hobo Boogie	Foley, Red	Decca 46304	7
1951	Hot Rod Race	Dolan, Jimmie	Capitol 1322	7
1951	Hot Rod Race	Foley, Red	Decca 46286	7
1951	Hot Rod Race	Hill, Tiny	Mercury 5547	7
1951	Howlin' At the Moon	Williams, Hank	MGM 10961	7
1951	I Can't Help It (If I'm Still In Love With You)	Williams, Hank	MGM 10961	2
1951	I Don't Want to Be Free	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 1816	2
1951	I Love You a Thousand Ways	Hawkins, Hawkshaw	King 918	1
1951	I Wanna Play House With You	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0476	1
1951	I Want To Be With You Always	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20799	1
1951	I'll Sail My Ship Alone	Hill, Tiny	Mercury 5508	2
1951	I'm Waiting Just for You	Hawkins, Hawkshaw	King 969	2
1951	If Teardrops Were Pennies	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20825	2
1951	It's No Secret	Hamblen, Stuart	Columbia 0390	9
1951	Kentucky Waltz	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0444	2
1951	Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20862	1
1951	Let's Live A Little	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20796	1
1951	Look What Thoughts Will Do	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20772	3

Table A-53: (continued)

1951	May the God Lord Bless and Keep You	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0425	9
1951	Mister and Mississippi	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 1521	5
1951	Mockin' Bird Hill	Paul, Les & Mary Ford	Capitol 1373	6
1951	Mom and Dad's Waltz	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20837	6
1951	Mr. Moon	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20825	1
1951	Music Makin' Mama From Memphis	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-4346	7
1951	My Heart Cries for You	Foley, Red & E. Knight	Decca 27278	2
1951	My Heart Cries for You	Wakely, Jimmy	Capitol 1328	2
1951	Old Soldiers Never Die	Autry, Gene	Columbia 39405	8
1951	On Top of Old Smoky	Weavers & T. Gilkyson	Decca 27515	7
1951	Poison Love	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 21-0377	3
1951	Rhumba Boogie	Snow, Hank	RCA 21-0431	7
1951	Shine, Shave, Shower	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20772	1
1951	Sick, Sober and Sorry	Bond, Johnny	Columbia 20808	7
1951	Slow Poke	Hawkins, Hawkshaw	King 998	7
1951	Slow Poke	King, Pee Wee	RCA 21-0489	7
1951	Somebody's Been Beating My Time	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4273	3
1951	Something Old, Something New	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-0476	2
1951	Sparrow in the Tree Top	Allen, Rex	Mercury 5597	1
1951	Strange Little Girl, The	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 46311	6
1951	Strange Little Girl, The	Copas, Cowboy	King 951	6
1951	Strange Little Girl, The	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 1470	6
1951	Tailor Made Woman	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 1349	7
1951	Tennessee Waltz	King, Pee Wee	RCA 21-0407	2
1951	Tennessee Waltz, The	Page, Patti	Mercury 5534	2
1951	There's Been A Change in Me	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 21-0412	7
1951	Too Old to Cut the Mustard	Carlises	Mercury 6348	7
1951	Travelin' Blues	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20842	3
1951	Unwanted Sign Upon Your Heart	Snow, Hank	RCA 21-0498	3
1951	When You and I Were Young Maggie Blues	Wakely, J. & M. Whiting	Capitol 1500	7
1952	(Now and Then, There's) A Fool Such As I	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5034	2
1952	(When You Feel Like You're In Love) Don't Just Stand There	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20893	7
1952	'Tis Sweet to Be Remembered	Copas, Cowboy	King 1000	1
1952	'Tis Sweet to Be Remembered	Flatt & Scruggs	Columbia 20886	1
1952	Almost	Morgan, George	Columbia 20906	1
1952	Are You Teasing Me	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20922	3
1952	Back Street Affair	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28369	4
1952	Blackberry Boogie	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 2170	7
1952	Bundle of Southern Sunshine	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4413	1
1952	Busybody	King, Pee Wee	RCA 20-4655	7
1952	Call Her Your Sweetheart	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4413	1
1952	Don't Let the Stars Get In Your Eyes	McDonald, Skeets	Capitol 2216	1
1952	Don't Let the Stars Get In Your Eyes	Price, Ray	Columbia 21025	1
1952	Don't Let the Stars Get In Your Eyes	Willet, Slim	Four Star 1614	1
1952	Don't Stay Away (Till Love Grows Cold)	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20911	1

Table A-53: (continued)

1952	Easy on the Eyes	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4569	7
1952	Forever (and Always)	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20911	2
1952	Fortunes in Memories	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 28310	2
1952	Full Time Job, A	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4787	7
1952	Gal Who Invented Kissin', The	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5034	7
1952	Gold Rush Is Over, The	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-4522	3
1952	Half As Much	Williams, Hank	MGM 11202	2
1952	Honky Tonk Blues	Williams, Hank	MGM 11160	4
1952	How Long Will It Take (To Stop Loving You)	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 20885	1
1952	I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus	Boyd, Jimmy	Columbia 39871	7
1952	I Went to Your Wedding	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-4909	2
1952	I'd Trade All of My Tomorrows (For Just One Yesterday)	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4954	2
1952	I'll Go On Alone	Robbins, Marty	Columbia 21022	3
1952	I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive	Williams, Hank	MGM 11366	7
1952	I'm An Old, Old Man (Tryin' to Live While I Can)	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 21034	7
1952	Indian Love Call	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8156	7
1952	It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels	Wells, Kitty	Decca 28232	3
1952	It's A Lovely, Lovely World	Smith, Carl	Columbia 20922	1
1952	Jambalaya (On the Bayou)	Williams, Hank	MGM 11283	7
1952	Keep It a Secret	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8169	2
1952	Lady's Man	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-4733	7
1952	Love Song of the Waterfall	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8134	1
1952	Married By the Bible, Divorced By the Law	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-4733	8
1952	Midnight	Foley, Red	Decca 28420	2
1952	Milk Bucket Boogie	Foley, Red	Decca 27981	7
1952	Missing In Action	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 46389	8
1952	My Heart is Broken in Three	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8169	7
1952	New Wears Off Too Fast, The	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2269	3
1952	Older and Bolder	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-4954	7
1952	Our Honeymoon	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21008	1
1952	Salty Dog Rag	Foley, Red	Decca 27981	7
1952	Settin' the Woods on Fire	Williams, Hank	MGM 11318	1
1952	Silver and Gold	King, Pee Wee	RCA 20-4458	6
1952	Somebody's Stolen My Honey	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 28067	3
1952	Talk to Your Heart	Price, Ray	Columbia 20913	2
1952	That Heart Belongs to Me	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28091	1
1952	Three Ways of Knowing	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 20-4555	3
1952	Till the End of the World	Crosby, Bing	Decca 28265	1
1952	Too Old To Cut the Mustard	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 46387	7
1952	Waiting in the Lobby of Your Heart	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2063	2
1952	Wild Side of Life	Ives, Burl	Decca 28055	2
1952	Wild Side Of Life, The	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 1942	2
1952	Wondering	Pierce, Webb	Decca 46364	2
1952	You Win Again	Williams, Hank	MGM 11318	3
1953	(Honey, Baby, Hurry) Bring Your Sweet Self Back to Me	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 21084	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1953	(How Much Is) That Hound Dog in the Window	Homer and Jethro	RCA 20-5280	7
1953	(I Just Had A Date) A Lover's Quarrel	Morgan, George	Columbia 21070	2
1953	Bimbo	Reeves, Jim	Abbott 148	7
1953	Bumming Around	Dean, Jimmy	Four Star 1613	5
1953	Bumming Around	Tyler, T. Texas	Decca 28579	5
1953	Caribbean	Torok, Mitchell	Abbott 140	7
1953	Crying in the Chapel	Allen, Rex	Decca 28758	9
1953	Crying in the Chapel	Glenn, Darrell	Valley 105	9
1953	Dear Joan	Cardwell, Jack	King 1269	3
1953	Dear John Letter, A	Shepherd, J. & F. Husky	Capitol 2502	8
1953	Death of Hank Williams, The	Cardwell, Jack	King 1172	8
1953	Divorce Granted	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 28869	3
1953	Do I Like It?	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21119	1
1953	Don't Let the Stars Get In Your Eyes	Foley, Red	Decca 28460	1
1953	Don't Throw Your Life Away	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28725	1
1953	Eddy's Song	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5108	7
1953	For Now and Always	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5380	1
1953	Forgive Me, John	Shepherd, J. & F. Husky	Capitol 2586	8
1953	Free Home Demonstration	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5305	7
1953	Gambler's Guitar	Draper, Rusty	Mercury 70167	5
1953	Goin' Steady	Young, Faron	Capitol 2299	1
1953	Hey Joe	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21129	7
1953	Hey Joe	Wells, Kitty	Decca 28797	7
1953	Hey, Mr. Cotton Picker	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 2443	7
1953	Honeymoon on a Rocket Ship	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5155	7
1953	Hot Toddy	Foley, Red	Decca 28587	7
1953	How's the World Treating You?	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5305	2
1953	I Can't Wait	Young, Faron	Capitol 2461	1
1953	I Couldn't Keep From Crying	Robbins, Marty	Columbia 21075	2
1953	I Forget More Than You'll Ever Know	Davis Sisters	RCA 20-5345	2
1953	I Found Out More Than You Ever Knew	Cody, Betty	RCA 20-5462	3
1953	I Haven't Got the Heart	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28594	3
1953	I Let the Stars Get In My Eyes	Hill, Goldie	Decca 28473	4
1953	I Won't Be Home No More	Williams, Hank	MGM 11533	3
1953	I'll Go On Alone	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28534	3
1953	I'm Walking the Dog	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28834	3
1953	Is Zat You, Myrtle	Carlises	Mercury 70174	7
1953	It's Been So Long	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28725	2
1953	Just Wait 'Til I Get You Alone	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21087	1
1953	Kaw-Liga	Williams, Hank	MGM 11416	7
1953	Knothole	Carlises	Mercury 70109	7
1953	Last Waltz, The	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28594	2
1953	Let Me Be the One	Locklin, Hank	Four Star 1641	1
1953	Mama, Come Get Your Baby Boy	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5415	7
1953	Marriage of Mexican Joe	Bradshaw, Carolyn	Abbott 141	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1953	Mexican Joe	Reeves, Jim	Abbott 116	7
1953	No Help Wanted	Carlisles	Mercury 70028	7
1953	No Help Wanted	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2376	7
1953	No Help Wanted, No. 2	Foley, Red & E. Tubb	Decca 28634	7
1953	North Wind	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8208	2
1953	Paying for That Back-Street Affair	Wells, Kitty	Decca 28578	4
1953	Rub-A-Dub-Dub	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2445	7
1953	Satisfaction Guaranteed	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21166	1
1953	Seven Lonely Days	Bonnie Lou	King 1192	7
1953	Shake a Hand	Foley, Red	Decca 28839	9
1953	Slaves of a Hopeless Love Affair	Foley, Red	Decca 28567	4
1953	Spanish Fire Ball	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5296	7
1953	Tain't Nice	Carlisles	Mercury 70232	7
1953	Take These Chains From My Heart	Williams, Hank	MGM 11479	3
1953	Tennessee Wig Walk	Bonnie Lou	King 1237	7
1953	That's All Right	Inman, Autry	Decca 28629	3
1953	That's Me Without You	James, Sonny	Capitol 2259	2
1953	That's Me Without You	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28534	2
1953	That's the Kind of Love I'm Looking For	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21051	1
1953	There Stands the Glass	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28834	4
1953	This Orchid Means Goodbye	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21087	4
1953	Till I Waltz Again With You	Sosebea, Tommy	Coral 60916	1
1953	Too Young to Tango	Sunshine Ruby	RCA 20-5250	7
1953	Trademark	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21119	7
1953	Wake Up, Irene	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2646	7
1953	Weary Blues From Waitin'	Williams, Hank	MGM 11574	2
1953	When Mexican Joe Met Jole Blon	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5490	7
1953	Yesterday's Girl	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2553	6
1953	You All Come	Duff, Arlie	Starday 104	7
1953	Your Cheatin' Heart	Williams, Hank	MGM 11416	3
1954	As Far As I'm Concerned	Foley, Red & Betty	Decca 29000	1
1954	Back Up Buddy	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21226	7
1954	Backward, Turn Backward	King, Pee Wee	RCA 20-5694	2
1954	Beware of It	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 20-5880	7
1954	Bimbo	King, Pee Wee	RCA 20-5537	7
1954	Breakin' the Rules	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2758	4
1954	Call Me Up	Robbins, Marty	Columbia 21291	1
1954	Changing Partners	King, Pee Wee	RCA 20-5537	1
1954	Cheatin's a Sin	Wells, Kitty	Decca 28911	2
1954	Christmas Can't Be Far Away	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5905	6
1954	Company's Comin'	Wagoner, Porter	RCA 20-5848	7
1954	Courtin' in the Rain	Tyler, T. Texas	Four Star 1660	7
1954	Cry, Cry Darling	Newman, Jimmy	Dot 1195	2
1954	Dog-Gone It, Baby, I'm in Love	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21197	1
1954	Don't Drop It	Fell, Terry	"X" 0010	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1954	Even Tho'	Pierce, Webb	Decca 29107	2
1954	Fooler, A Faker, A	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2758	3
1954	Go, Boy, Go	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21266	7
1954	Good Deal, Lucille	Terry, Al	Hickory 1003	7
1954	Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 20-5775	1
1954	Hep Cat Baby	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5805	7
1954	Hernando's Highway	Homer and Jethro	RCA 20-5788	7
1954	Honey Love	Carlises	Mercury 70435	1
1954	Honey, I Need You	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 20-5775	2
1954	Honky-Tonk Girl	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2823	6
1954	Hootchy Kootchy Henry (From Hawaii)	Torok, Mitchell	Abbott 150	7
1954	I Don't Hurt Anymore	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5698	3
1954	I Love You	Reeves, Jim & G. Wright	Fabor 101	1
1954	I Really Don't Want to Know	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5525	1
1954	I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me)	Price, Ray	Columbia 21214	1
1954	I'm A Stranger In My Home	Foley, Red & Kitty Wells	Decca 29065	3
1954	If You Ain't Lovin'	Young, Faron	Capitol 2953	7
1954	If You Don't, Someone Else Will	Jimmy & Johnny	Chess 4859	3
1954	If You Don't, Somebody Else Will	Price, Ray	Columbia 21315	3
1954	Jilted	Foley, Red	Decca 29100	3
1954	Kiss Crazy Baby	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 20-5880	1
1954	Let Me Go, Lover	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5960	3
1954	Looking Back to See	Browns	Fabor 107	7
1954	Looking Back to See	Hill, Goldie & J. Tubb	Decca 29145	7
1954	Loose Talk	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21317	8
1954	More and More	Pierce, Webb	Decca 29252	3
1954	More Than Anything Else in the World	Smith, Carl	Columbia 21317	1
1954	Much to Young to Die	Price, Ray	Columbia 21249	2
1954	My Everything	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5634	1
1954	Never	Tuttle, Wesley & Marilyn	Capitol 2850	1
1954	New Green Light, The	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2920	3
1954	Oh, Baby Mine (I Get So Lonely)	Johnnie and Jack	RCA 20-5681	2
1954	One By One	Foley, Red & Kitty Wells	Decca 29065	4
1954	Out Behind the Barn	Dickens, "Little" Jimmy	Columbia 21247	7
1954	Penny Candy	Reeves, Jim	Abbott 170	7
1954	Place for Girls Like You, A	Young, Faron	Capitol 2859	3
1954	Pretty Words	Robbins, Marty	Columbia 21246	2
1954	Release Me	Heap, J. w/Perk Williams	Capitol 2518	3
1954	Release Me	Price, Ray	Columbia 21214	3
1954	Release Me	Wells, Kitty	Decca 29023	3
1954	River of No Return	Ford, Tennessee Ernie	Capitol 2810	2
1954	Rose-Marie	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8236	1
1954	Run 'Em Off	Frizzell, Lefty	Columbia 21194	7
1954	Secret Love	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8220	1
1954	Shake A Leg	Carlises	Mercury 70351	7

Table A-53: (continued)

1954	She Done Give Her Heart To Me	James, Sonny	Capitol 2906	1
1954	Singing Hills	Whitman, Slim	Imperial 8267	2
1954	Slowly	Pierce, Webb	Decca 28991	1
1954	Sparkling Brown Eyes	Pierce, Webb	Decca 29107	1
1954	Thank You For Calling	Walker, Billy	Columbia 21256	2
1954	That Crazy Mambo Thing	Snow, Hank	RCA 20-5912	7
1954	Then I'll Stop Loving You	Reeves, Jim	Abbott 160	1
1954	This is the Thanks I Get (For Loving You)	Arnold, Eddy	RCA 20-5805	3
1954	This Ole House	Hamblen, Stuart	Columbia 21290	6
1954	Thou Shalt Not Steal	Wells, Kitty	Decca 29313	4
1954	Two Glasses, Joe	Tubb, Ernest	Decca 29220	4
1954	We've Gone Too Far	Thompson, Hank	Capitol 2823	4
1954	Whatcha Gonna Do Now	Collins, Tommy	Capitol 2891	7
1954	You Better Not Do That	Collins, Tommy	Capitol 2701	7
1954	You Can't Have My Love	Jackson, W. & Billy Gray	Decca 29140	7
1954	You're Not Mine Anymore	Pierce, Webb	Decca 29252	2

Sources: Charles Faber, The Country Music Almanac: 1922-1943, Volume One (Lexington: Charles F. Faber, 1978); Joel Whitburn, The Billboard Book of Top 40 Country Hits (New York: Billboard Books, 1996).

*Lyrical Categories defined in Figure 4

VITA

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